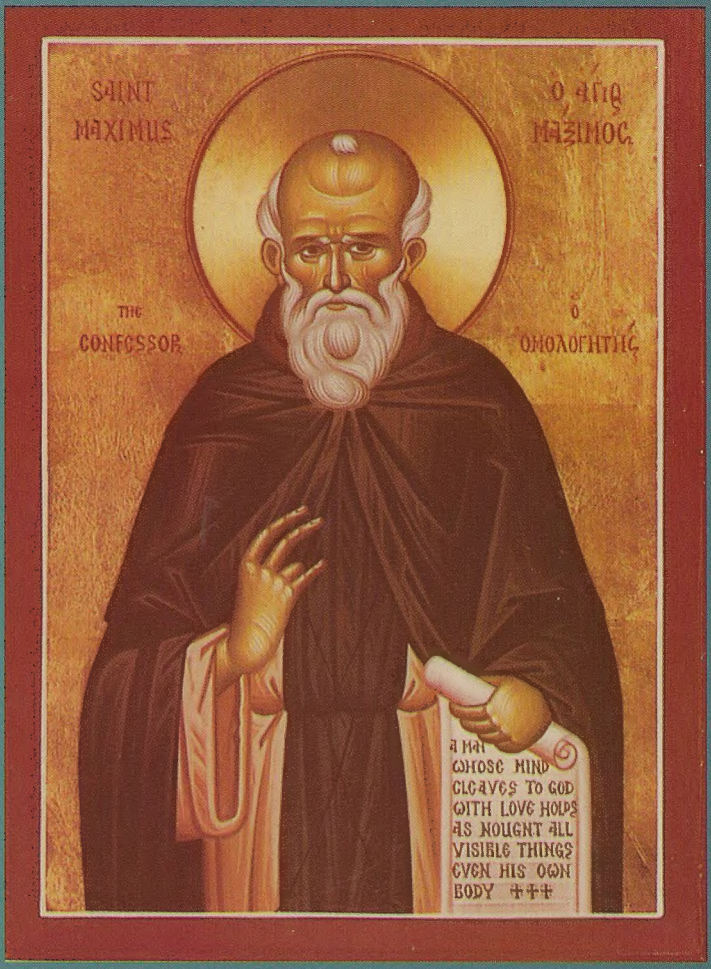

FREE CHOICE in ST. MAXIMUS The CONFESSOR

Joseph P. Farrell, D. Phil (Oxon).

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With a forward by
His Grace the Right Reverend
Kallistos (Ware)
Bishop of Diokleia

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Joseph P. Farrell
Feast of the Holy Ascension, 1988
Topeka, Kansas

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Forward

St Maximus the Confessor (d. 662) is without doubt one of the most outstanding Fathers of the Eastern Church - indeed, one of the greatest thinkers in the whole history of Christianity. His writings embrace almost all the major themes of Christian theology: the Trinity, the doctrine of creation, the human person as microcosm and mediator, Christ as the centre of history, the sacraments, the ascetic and mystical life. His crucial significance has become ever more manifest in the past twenty-five years, but hitherto little has been written about him in English, apart from two fundamental volumes by Dr. Lars Thunberg. The present work by Dr. Joseph Farrell forms a notable addition to the existing English bibliography.

Dr. Farrell's work is concerned with a central element in the doctrinal synthesis of the Confessor: his understanding of human free choice. St Maximus was *par excellence* a theologian of freedom - the human freedom of Christ, the human freedom given to each of us. Dr. Farrell inquires more specifically how, according to St. Maximus, it is possible for the redeemed in Heaven to possess a genuine possibility of choice, even though all their choices will be good. This is a topic of basic importance for any appreciation of Maximus, yet one to which little detailed study has so far been devoted.

Central to Dr. Farrell's argument is St. Maximus' notion of a multiplicity of divine principles or energies in Heaven. He contrasts this with the conception of divine simplicity to be found in the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and Origen. At the end of his work he also attempts a fascinating comparison between St. Maximus and St. Augustine, referring here to Western disputes concerning free will and predestination. Without claiming to deal exhaustively with this last subject, he indicates some highly promising avenues for future discussion.

There are various ways of approaching St. Maximus. In opposition to much recent Maximian scholarship, Dr. Farrell believes that he is best regarded as a precursor of the great Byzantine theologian St, Gregory Palamas, rather than of Thomas Aquinas. This is not a view that all specialists will readily accept, but Dr. Farrell has argued his case with lucidity and force. He

possesses a penetrating and creative mind, and he is gifted with unusual powers of analysis and insight. St. Maximus is a difficult thinker, and Dr. Farrell does not gloss over the difficulties; but he has the ability to handle a vast and highly complex theme with sensitivity and dialectical skill.

This new study of St Maximus deserves to be read with close attention by all who are concerned with Patristic Studies or with Orthodox theology. As a work of careful scholarship and genuine originality, it makes a significant contribution to our understanding of St.Maximus the Confessor.

+Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia
University of Oxford
26 January 1989

PART ONE

The freedom of a creature must imply freedom to choose; and choice implies the existence of things to choose between. A creature with no environment would have no choices to make: so that freedom... demands the presence to self of something other than the self.

C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

Chapter 1

The Historical Position of St. Maximus

The question of the vision of God, not only among Byzantine theologians of the fourteenth century but also in earlier history, especially among the Greek Fathers, presents serious difficulties for those who want to study it from the standpoint of the concepts appropriate to Latin scholasticism.

Vladimir Lossky, The Vision Of God[1]

I. General Remarks

One has only to glance at the names of various titles amongst the growing literature on St. Maximus to appreciate the fact that, for depth and subtlety of thoughts on such a breadth of topics, St. Maximus the Confessor almost beggars comparison. His system, which gathers the currents of Aristotle, Origen, St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Cappadocians, St. (Pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite, and the Neo-Chalcedonians into one great river,[2] has been variously described by those studies as a cosmic liturgy,[3] a refutation of Origenism,[4] and a theological anthropology of man as a microcosm and a mediator.[5] There is a joyous acumen with

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1. Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, p. 20.

2. Polycarp Sherwood, trans. *The Ascetic Life; The Four Centuries on Charity*, p. 3; cf. Alain Riou, *Le Monde et L'Eglise selon Maxime le Confesseur*, p. 10; ohn Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, p. 37; cf. also John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 132.

3. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des ekenners*. cf. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism*. Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, particularly pp. 16-19.

4. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism*.

5. Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, particularly pages 16-19.

which St. Maximus moves within the world of divine doctrine, a remarkable fact, since in the whole of his life he never held any ecclesiastical order. He was rather one of the innumerable lay and monastic theologians who were, and are, so much a part of the life of the Orthodox Church. Polycarp Sherwood writes:

> If then Maximus is called theologian, as sometimes he has been, it is rather in the sense that St. John the Evangelist is called theologian. For the coherence of Maximus' thought, which not all would allow, does not derive from the systematization of the Church's teaching in the function of some humanly-posited principle of philosophy, but from a vision of the divine things in the light of the Incarnation of the Son of God, in the light therefore of that mystery by which we alone know the Father and our salvation.[6]

It is in this spirit that we must understand St. Maximus, his life, his position in the previous and subsequent elaboration of the formulation of dogma, and the underlying consistency of his system. Indeed, if it was the Confessor's great life-work to accomplish the refutations of both Origenism and Monotheletism from a position consistent to both concerns, then we must see what that position is, and what principles are involved in, or eschewed by, it. Only then will we be able to discover, deep within the system itself and emerging in a few passages scattered here and there throughout his writings, that in the process of his polemical tasks he outlined a doctrine of free choice unique in its eschatological implications.

II. The Life of St. Maximus

Both Polycarp Sherwood and Lars Thunberg agree in placing the date of the Confessor's birth around the year 580 A. D. and his death in 662. That is to say, St. Maximus was born in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius I Constantine, and lived through the reigns of Maurice, Phocas, Heraclius, Constantine III, finally to die in the reign of Constans II. He saw the reign of two monothelete Patriarchs of Constantinople, Sergius and Pyrrhus I. Two famous bishops of Rome were his contemporaries: Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-604) and Pope St. Martin the First (649-655).

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6. Sherwood, *Ascetic Life*, p. 4f.

Geographically, his life is almost coterminous with the boundaries of the Byzantine Empire of that period. He appears, for example, at Constantinople from around 610-614 as the Emperor Heraclius' first secretary, then again in North Africa before the decisive *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, held in Carthage in July of 645, and a little later at Rome where he had a role in the Lateran Council of 649, and finally at Lazica, in the south-east corner of the Black Sea, where at the end of his life he is exiled for his advocacy of the two natural wills of Christ.

St. Maximus received a comprehensive education consisting of "grammar, classical literature, rhetoric and philosophy,"[7] which latter subject comprised everything from "arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy, (and) logic" to "ethics, dogmatics and metaphysics."[8] Such an education was typical for those who aspired to enter the imperial service, and normally lasted from around the seventh year to the twenty-first.[9] It was doubtless here that St. Maximus would have read not only the works of such Neoplatonists and commentators as Iamblichus and Proclus, but the works of Plato and perhaps Aristotle as well.[10] His zeal in pursuing this education, as well as his reputation for virtue, earned him the attention of the Emperor Heraclius (610-641), who appointed him to the prestigious post of his first secretary. It was most probably here, during these years of imperial service, that St. Maximus gained the intimate contacts with the men of the imperial court which "his later correspondence permits us to appreciate."[11]

This period ends, however, around the years 613-614 according to his biographer,[12] when St. Maximus withdrew to the

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7. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, p. 1, note 4.
8. Ibid.
9. Sherwood, *Ascetic Life*, p. 6.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 6f.
12. i.e. Anastasius, St. Maximus' disciple. A Syriac life of the Confessor was translated and published by Dr. Sebastian Brock in 1973. While the differences between this life and the Greek life do not bear upon the dogmatic and logical concerns of this essay, it it worth mentioning that the Syriac life differs from the Greek life in some significant ways, most especially in its account of St. Maximus' early life. "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor," *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), pp. 314-315, 341.

monastery of Chrysopolis[13] to pursue the monastic life. The Confessor's biographer supplies the motive for his action as being the emergence of Monotheletism in the imperial court.[14] This seems highly improbable, for the doctrine of Monotheletism - in its monenergistic guise - though it "may be traced back as far as 619, could not have had any important impact by the time that Maximus became a monk."[15] There were no changes, for example, in his amicable relationship with John the Chamberlain, as is evident by his congenial exchange of correspondence with him.[16]

Once in the monastic life, St. Maximus displayed a similar zeal and facility as that which he demonstrated in his education, and made swift progress in the spiritual life. It is not surprising that in 618 he already has a disciple by the name of Anastasius, who was to be with the Confessor for the rest of his life.[17] How long he must have stayed at Chrysopolis cannot be determined, but at some point before the Persian attack on Constantinople in 626 he must have transferred to the monastery of St. George at Cyzicus, for it is from this latter monastery that he is forced to leave by the Persian attack and make his way to North Africa.[18]

It is likely that it was in this period, the period of his stays at Chrysopolis and Cyzicus, when the pressures of polemics were not yet thrust upon him, that the Confessor would have found the time to read the works of the Areopagite, the Cappadocians, and the great Alexandrian theologians. It is thus to this period that his earliest writings are assigned, and it is likely that the *Ambigua* was at least conceived in this period, though probably written at a later time. From Cyzicus, St. Maximus makes his way to Carthage via Crete, arriving before 633, perhaps between 628 and 630, for he describes his relationship to Sophronius, then abbot of the local monastery in Carthage, as that of a monk to his spiritual father. It is known that St. Sophronius is in Alexandria in 633, where he is elected Patriarch of Jerusalem in 634. This necessitates that St.

13. Chrysopolis was located across the Bosporus from Constantinople, to the northeast of Chalcedon and near the entrance to the straits from the Black Sea.

14. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, p. 2.

15. Ibid., p. 3.

16. Ibid.

17. Sherwood, *Ascetic Life*, p. 7.

18. Ibid., p. 10; cf. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, pp. 3-4, especially note 1 on p. 4.

Maximus arrive some time prior to Sophronius' departure from Carthage for such a relationship as the Confessor describes to develop.[19] It was evidently during this time that St. Sophronius awakened the Confessor to the dangers of the new heresy of Monotheletism,[20] for it is from the time of Sophronius' accession to the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem that St. Maximus begins to be so inextricably involved with the monothelete controversy, so much so, in fact, that "the rest of his life was to be entirely shaped by the clarity and rigidity of his dyothelete position."[21] Notwithstanding this polemical task, however, the African period is a long and predominantly stable time for the Confessor, and he does not leave Africa until after his *Disputation with Pyrrhus* in July 645. Even though St. Maximus becomes involved with the monothelete controversy around the year 634, he does not, however, promote his own Dyotheletism with any vigour until the year 638. Why this is so is readily apparent.

In the *Psephos* of 633, Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople prohibited any mention of either one or two wills in Christ and permitted one to say only that the one Christ effects both divine and human things. Sergius prescribed this prohibition ostensibly because some feared that talk of one operation or energy implied a denial of the two natures. There was a more tendentious reason, however. The prohibition was stipulated because the expression "two energies" was not found in the fathers and further implied, according to Sergius' logic, two *opposed* or *contrary* wills.[22] This last point made it perfectly clear in which direction Sergius was headed, that is to say, the attention of the discussion was already turning away from *energies* and towards *wills*. But Maximus nevertheless accepted the *Psephos* within the terms of his own doctrinal position, treating the document as authoritative, with the reservation, however, that its favoured Monenergism was hardly acceptable "unless the term *operation* is explained."[23] It was thus the weak terminology in which the *Psephos* was couched, that is to say, the weak connotations of the term "energy" itself,

19. Sherwood, *Ascetic Life*, pp. 10-11.

20. Ibid., p. 11.

21. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, p. 5.

22. Sherwood, *Ascetic Life*, pp. 15-16.

23. Ibid., p. 17.

which allowed the Confessor to maintain his own dyothelete position without offending the official court doctrine. It is only with the much more explicit *Ekthesis*, promulgated in 638, that the tendency Sergius exhibited in the *Psephos* is made explicit. Consequently, from that time onward, St. Maximus is forced to be in active and open opposition to a clearly stated monothelete doctrine, an opposition which finds expression in the *Theological and Polemical Works (Opuscula Theologica et Polemica)* and its ultimate refinement in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus (Disputatio cum Pyrrho)*. Indeed, so thorough was the Confessor in the latter work that we read of Pyrrhus' request to visit Rome and make a formal recantation of his Monotheletism before the Pope. This is confirmed by the *Relatio Motionis* which informs us that both Pyrrhus and Maximus are in Rome simultaneously in the year 646, even though they may not have traveled there together.[24] At any rate, this marks the end of St. Maximus' African period, and the beginning of his support of papal efforts in the dyothelete cause.

With the accession of the Emperor Constans II in 641 all the factors are in place which will lead to the Confessor's final mutilation and martyrdom for Dyotheletism. While St. Maximus is in Rome, the Emperor issues the *Typos* (645) in a determined effort to quash the controversy and the opposition to Monotheletism. In terms scarcely different to the two previous documents of Monotheletism, and thus hardly acceptable to the Dyotheletes, Constans forbids any mention of one or two wills in Christ. Pope St. Martin responds decisively at the Council of the Lateran in 649,[25] which explicitly condemns Monotheletism as a heresy. This action left Constans no choice but to enforce the *Typos* in Rome, and he sent his exarch in Ravenna to Rome for that

24. cf. *Relatio Motionis*, pg. 90: 117D-120-C.

25. For an excellent study in English of the Lateran Council of 649 and its decisions set within the wider context of the whole monothelete controversy, see Charles Joseph Hefele's *History of the Councils of the Church from the Original Documents*, Vol 5, *A. D. 626 to the Close of the Second Council of Nicea*, trans. William R. Clark. New York: AMS Press Inc., 1972 (a reprint of the English edition published by T. T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1896). It is worth noting here that Hefele's work was subsequently revised by Dom LeClercq in the early part of this century, bringing it up to date with the latest research. cf. Hefele-LeClercq, *Histoire des Concils d'apres les documents originaux*. Vol. III, Pt. 1, Paris: Letouzey et Ane. 1909 (pp. 317-538 for the treatment of Monotheletism).

purpose. Once in Rome, however, the exarch came over to the dyothelete position, and consequently the much-exasperated Constans could not take effective action until the exarch's death in 652. Pope St. Martin and St. Maximus, who was now an old man, were then arrested and taken to Constantinople.

At their first trial, efforts to fasten political charges on Maximus and his disciple Anastasius failed completely, and they were sent to a temporary exile in Bizya in Thrace. Yet another effort was made the next year to persuade the Confessor to accept the *Typos*. This too ended in complete failure, for St. Maximus and his disciple remained firm. They were awarded a second exile in Perberis, where they remained for six more years. The Emperor Constans finally lost patience in the year 662, and recalled St. Maximus and Anastasius to the imperial capital for a final trial and punishment.

> This time the accusation no longer had any political tinge. The... remaining most notable exponents of orthodox doctrine in the east were summoned before a monothelite council, where, together with Martin and Sophronius, they were anathematized and then turned over to the civil officer there present for the execution of the sentence - the mutilation of those members by which they had propounded the dyothelite doctrine. Their tongues and right hands amputated, therefore, they were taken about the city, exposed to the scorn of the populace, before being shipped off to their exile in Lazica, on the south-east shore of the Black Sea.[26]

Broken by his age and the mutilation which he had endured for the orthodox doctrine, the former imperial secretary and monk at last succumbed to death later that year.

III. His Position in the History of Dogma

St. Maximus stands firmly within the Neo-Chalcedonian, or Cyrillic Chalcedonian, tradition of Christology. There were four christological positions elaborated subsequently to the Fourth Ecumenical Council, and a word is necessary about each of them before the Cyrillic Chalcedonian position, and St. Maximus' relationship to it, may be fully appreciated. This can best be done by comparing the work of this school's three major theologians over against the positions which opposed Neo-Chalcedonianism.

26. Sherwood, *Ascetic Life*, p. 27.

This Neo-Chalcedonian, or as Fr. John Meyendorff calls it (with more accuracy), "Cyrillic Chalcedonian" tradition is distinguished by three main features; first, by its acceptance of the Theopaschite Formula as a positive criterion of orthodoxy; second, by its insistence upon a consistent set of terminology, particularly where the term "hypostasis" was concerned, applicable to both Triadology and Christology; and third, by its insistence that there was no contradiction between St. Cyril of Alexandria and the position taken by the Council of Chalcedon. This last point serves to indicate that, notwithstanding its insistence upon a set terminology operative with the same meanings in both Triadology and Christology, technical terms were considered not as ends but only appropriate ways of dealing with both Nestorianism and Eutychianism.[27]

These features help to distinguish Cyrillic Chalcedonianism most sharply from three other schools of thought more or less its contemporaries. Its emphasis upon the continuity of terminology between Triadology and Christology, coupled with its insistence upon the theopaschite formula, led naturally enough to the conclusion that the hypostasis of Christ was the truly preexistent hypostasis of the *Logos*, a position maintained in opposition to the Strict Dyophysites for whom the hypostasis of Christ was not preexistent. For the latter school, the hypostasis of Christ, since it was a synthetic or composite hypostasis, arose only at the time of the Annunciation, that is, at the time of the union of the two natures. The Cyrillic Chalcedonian tradition is also to be distinguished from the monophysite reading of St. Cyril which maintained that the hypostasis of Christ did preexist, but that after the union there was one synthetic nature of Christ. And finally, the Cyrillic Chalcedonian position is to be distinguished from that of the Origenists, for whom there was both a preexistent divine hypostasis *and* an equally eternal "Christ-soul" which remained steadfast and unmoved in the contemplation and knowledge of God. Three theologians, John the Grammarian (active ca. 514-518), the Emperor Justinian (reigned 527-565), and Leontius of Jerusalem (active ca. 543-544), are representative of the Cyrillic Chalcedonian position elaborated over a period of years and in respect to the three opposing schools outlined above. In addition, a fourth theologian, Leontius of Byzantium, while not

27. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 34.

to be classified as a Neo-Chalcedonian,[28] did elaborate certain conceptions which, in the capable hands of St. Maximus, contributed to the general direction and impetus of the Neo-Chalcedonian tradition.

For John the Grammarian the two distinct natures of Christ were a soteriological necessity. Monophysitism could not offer salvation, for if Christ were neither divine nor human (such was the perception of Monophysitism by all Chalcedonian parties) then there was no true union of God and man. John maintained that deification did not, in fact, mean a *change* of natures but a union in which each retained its full integrity. It was a soteriological necessity, therefore, that Christ have two natures, divine and human. For Leontius of Jerusalem, there is an absolute distinction between nature (φύσις) and hypostasis. The union which was in Christ was therefore the union of two natures in the preexistent hypostasis of the *Logos*. This left unresolved, however, the question of why there was no hypostasis of Christ's human nature, a position which seemed to be adequately explained by Leontius of Byzantium's Origenistic preexistent human "Christ-soul". This affirmation was hardly acceptable to Leontius of Jerusalem, and it is easy to see why. The notion of a preexistent "Christ-soul" united with the *Logos* by mere contemplation of it was but a relational union, possessing all the dynamics and implications of Nestorianism recast in the neoplatonic scheme of contemplation. Accepting the basic principle behind the Origenist affirmation, that there could be no nature without an hypostasis, he nevertheless elaborated it in a novel manner. While it was certainly true and necessary for every nature to exist in an hypostasis, or to be "enhypostasized" as it were, it did not necessarily follow that a nature of any kind had to be enhypostasized in an hypostasis of the same kind. In other words, a created human nature did not require enhypostasization in a human hypostasis, equally created, but only in an hypostasis as such. In Christ's case, this was the preexistent hypostasis of the *Logos*. For Leontius of Jerusalem then, the personal principle and center of Christ's humanity is the divine and preexistent Son of God.

28. cf. Brian Daley, "The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium," *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 27 (New Series), 1976, pp. 333-369.

In his work, Justinian the Emperor incorporated, in varying degrees, the work of the two Leontii and of John the Grammarian. Since human nature was enhypostasized in the preexistent Son of God, it was thus hypostatically united with the divine nature which was also enhypostasized in the one and the same Son of God. This combination of the disparate insights of John and the two Leontii permitted Justinian and the Fifth Ecumenical Council to accept the Theopaschite Formula fully, yet without any of the monophysite connotations hitherto latent in that formula.[29] Because the sole principle of Christ's humanity is the *Logos*, it is thus true that "God suffered in the flesh." This fact becomes particularly important in St. Maximus' polemics with Monotheletism and becomes a basis for his formulation of the distinction between the gnomic and natural will as well.

It is by virtue of his vast synthesis of all these earlier theological elements, the Cyrillic Chalcedonian no less than the Origenist and Dionysian, that St. Maximus "was capable of establishing the orthodox solution of the monothelite question."[30] It is Lars Thunberg's conviction that this Cyrillic Chalcedonian attitude is at the heart of St. Maximus' synthesis. His theology, according to Thunberg, "reveals... a natural and logical development on the basis of a general Chalcedonian conviction, which is never seriously doubted or shaken."[31] It is this christological conviction that allows the Confessor to offer a uniquely Christian philosophical counterpart to Origen's myth of creation, a counterpart which is simultaneously a doctrine of deification and the spiritual life, based upon St. Cyril of Alexandria's soteriology and the Christology of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and its subsequent Neo-Chalcedonian elaboration.[32] Hence, if there is a tendency amongst some scholars to regard his theology in terms of a "difference in weight and interest... between an earlier and a later time,"[33] then this is perhaps best explained by the fact that the fundamental

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29. For a much more detailed discussion of Cyrillic Chalcedonianism, see T. R. Gray's valuable work, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451-533)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1979.

30. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, p. 10.

31. Ibid.

32. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 37.

33. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, p. 11.

consistency of St. Maximus' synthesis has not been sought at its true source, its Christ-centredness. If there has been a development in St. Maximus, therefore, or even an Origenist "crisis,"[34] then this should be seen more as a crisis within St. Maximus' own Neo-Chalcedonian development, the crisis being to apply a consistent terminology while still acknowledging the orthodoxy of St. Cyril of Alexandria's own rather ambiguous usage. It is, indeed, the Confessor's "terminology which is later more clearly defined and not his theology."[35]

It is this Cyrillic Chalcedonian reciprocity between christological and triadological terminology which links St. Maximus with subsequent Byzantine theologians, most clearly with St. Gregory Palamas.

This connection is often disputed, however, and a word must be said about it here, for it has a great bearing upon what we believe to be the unique contribution of this essay. St. Gregory Palamas often couched his doctrine of the divine and uncreated energies "in terms which are almost always borrowed from St.

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34. Ibid., p. 15. It was von Balthasar who suggested such a crisis in the Confessor's life and doctrine. In his study on the *Gnostic Centuries* he came to the conclusion that they were of Maximian origin, and that their attitude to Origenism was uncritical and accepting. If one granted this thesis, then clearly St. Maximus must have moved from such an unhesitating commitment to the more critical and polemical attitude taken towards Origenism in his *Ambigua*, especially in the *Seventh Ambigua*. Polycarp Sherwood, however, notes that the texture

> of Maximus' refutation of Origen in the *Ambigua* seems to me sufficiently coherent. We may then point out some of the relations that obtain between the two (Gnostic) Centuries in question and the other works of Maximus.
>
> First of all, the two Centuries seem to be a literary unity, not the work of a compiler. Von Balthasar has drawn attention to the many similarities between the Centuries and the *Questions to Thalassius* and *to Theopemptus*. I for my part would draw particular attention to the intimate relations which bind the contrary motifs of the Centuries to the *Ambigua*....
>
> If such an interpretation of Maximus be tenable, he then appears not as suffering an Origenist crisis, but as deliberately endeavoring to give the assimilable elements in the Alexandrian master's thought a secure place in monastic tradition. (*Ascetic Life*, p. 9).

This essay is based upon the presupposition of unity in St. Maximus' thought, and agrees with Sherwood and Thunberg that there is no "Origenist crisis" in Maximus' own life, other than a crisis of having to refute it.

35. Ibid., p. 11.

Maximus the Confessor."[36] And this terminology is borrowed precisely from the Confessor's Christology:

> Did not monotheletism deny that all nature was defined *ad extra* by an energy? Maximus in his doctrine of the two energies or wills of Christ, has, on the contrary, affirmed that without an energy, every nature, whether divine or human, does not possess real existence, and that consequently Christ must necessarily possess two energies manifesting the full reality of his two natures. References to this doctrine of St. Maximus are frequent throughout Gregory's writings.... Moreover, one recalls that the dogmatic definition of the council of 1351 described itself as a development (ἀνάπτυξις) of the decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and that the *Tome* made a long reference to the debates of 681.[37]

It is at this point that Gregory is often accused of a departure from the doctrine of St. Maximus. After all, did not Maximus speak of only *two* energies of Christ? Does that not mean that the divine nature has just *one* energy and not a multitude of them? Would not a plurality of divine energies violate the simplicity of the divine essence?[38] It is this last question which is at the heart of most western objections, both medieval and modern, to Palamism, and it is this question which is also, to a certain extent, at the heart of this essay on St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice.

To accuse Palamas of a misapplication of Maximus' Christology and the categories it entails is to rob Cyrillic Chalcedonianism of its dynamic and genius, which was precisely to have a consistent terminology applicable to both Triadology and Christology. If Palamas could thus borrow the Confessor's christological conceptions, it was only because the Confessor himself borrowed his christological conceptions from the earlier trinitarian reflections of the Cappadocians.

> Maximus' thought uses the Aristotelean concept of each nature's having its own 'energy', or existential manifestation. The Cappadocian Fathers had applied the same principle to their doctrine of the three hypostases in God. Gregory of Nyssa, in particular, had to defend himself against the accusation of tritheism; the three hypostases are not three Gods because they have one nature, as is evident from the fact that there is only one

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36. John Meyendorff, *A Study of St. Gregory Palamas*, trans. George Lawrence, Leighton Buzzard: The Faith Press, 1974, p. 181.

37. Ibid., p. 211f.

38. Juan Miguel Garrigues, O. P. "L'énergie divin et la grâce chez Maxime le Confesseur," *Istina* 19 (1974), p. 276.

> 'energy' of God. Already then, in Cappadocian thought, the concept of 'energy' is linked with that of nature. Maximus could therefore refer to tradition in opposing the Monothelite contention that 'energy' reflects the one hypostasis or person or actor, and that therefore Christ could have only one energy.[39]

The Confessor's anti-monothelete polemic thus took as its starting point the doctrine of the Trinity, for it attempted to clarify

> christological terminology on the basis of trinitarian usage. In the Trinity there were three hypostases, but only one divine nature; otherwise there would be three gods.... Thus will was an attribute of a nature and not of a hypostasis, natural, and not hypostatic. Hence the person of Christ, with a single hypostasis and two natures, had to have two wills, one for each nature.[40]

This, then, is the dynamic of Neo-Chalcedonianism; it allows the transfer both of the terminologies and of the concepts that they signify from Trinitarian theology to Christology, in the case of St. Maximus, and of terminologies and concepts from Christology to Trinitarian theology in the case of St. Gregory Palamas. It is, in other words, within the dynamics of Cyrillic Chalcedonianism itself that one must seek the links between Maximus, his predecessors, and those who came after him. Why the Confessor's doctrine of the two natural wills in Christ, why his theological anthropology and its rich doctrine of free choice necessarily implied and ultimately led to Palamism is a relationship that hitherto has not been explored. But for this relationship, and therefore the distinctive contribution of this essay, to be appreciated fully, it is necessary to survey the current literature available on St. Maximus to see why the question should arise in the first place.

IV. Previous Studies and Assessments

In his monumental study *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of St. Maximus the Confessor*, Lars Thunberg divides the studies of St. Maximus into three periods: those studies written in the period up to 1930, those studies comprising the period of 1930-1941, and finally those studies from

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39. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 37f.

40. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Volume 2, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (600-1700), p. 72.

the period 1941 to the present. In the case of Thunberg's study, "the present" means 1965, the date of its first publication. For the purposes of this essay, it is not necessary to mention each of the studies already covered in Thunberg. It will only be necessary to outline the salient features of the significant studies of each of Thunberg's three periods, and of course those studies which have appeared subsequently to the publication of *Microcosm and Mediator*. From this survey, a general picture of an attitude towards St. Maximus emerges and serves to bring into greater relief the distinctive perspective of this study.

The first period, lasting until 1930, is perhaps best characterized as the period of an awakening interest in the Confessor upon the part of modern theologians and historians of doctrine. Accordingly, it is in this period that various studies appear summarizing his work, usually in terms of its anti-monothelete polemic.[41] The first major attempt to place St. Maximus within a more comprehensive doctrinal context, even if one still limited to a presentation of Maximus solely in terms of his anti-monothelete polemic, must unquestionably be the study of Karl Joseph Hefele, the immensely scholarly bishop of Rottenberg, in his *History of the Councils of the Church from the Original Documents*, a work which was subsequently revised by Dom H. LeClercq and which remains, in this form, a standard in its field.

As the study of Monotheletism there given is not, strictly speaking, dedicated solely to the Confessor or some aspect of his thought, it is not surprising that it receives no mention by Thunberg. But it is a study of Maximus nonetheless, since the Confessor dominates Hefele's presentation no less than he dominated the actual period. The English edition of his conciliar history made available for the first time an English translation not only of portions of the *Ekthesis* (638) but also of the Confessor's famous dispute with the monothelete Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus. In spite of the massive amount of detail which Hefele presents, his treatment of the Confessor is, however, couched in terms that Thunberg would explicity reject, for Hefele sees the Confessor as "the classical enemy of monotheletism."

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41. It is, for example, in most nineteenth-century histories of doctrine that St. Maximus is portrayed, in Thunberg's words, as "the classical enemy of monotheletism," though in the twentieth century this first period is marked by a growing awareness of his wider system of doctrine.

In the second period lasting from 1930-1941, the trend is to see St. Maximus in a more negative light. A certain hesitancy is ascribed to his coming to the dyothelete position; he is thought to have undergone a genuine change of dogmatic opinion in terms of his own system, moving from either a hesitant acceptance or outright endorsement of the monothelete position to a fully fledged and vigorously articulated Dyotheletism.

The third and present period begins with the appearance of Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Kosmische Liturgie* in 1941 and is characterized largely by a reaction to the attitudes and assumptions of the second period. Thunberg says that its main attributes are

> clear signs of a new a positive reevaluation of Maximus.... This was a somewhat hesitant attitude at first, but later it becomes more and more convinced.[42]

He further observes that this period is "still continuing", and that his own contribution, *Microcosm and Mediator*, "intends to widen this evaluation to cover some of the aspects which have so far not been sufficiently treated."[43] This is the period that is most typified by the systematic treatment of the Confessor, that is, by the treatment of the whole body of the Confessor's writings as a coherent body of doctrine. It is this last period which has seen the publication of major works on St. Maximus. In addition to Thunberg and von Balthasar, Polycarp Sherwood published two important studies indispensable to the Maximus scholar: *The Annotated Date List of St. Maximus the Confessor* and *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism.* Throughout the 1970's *Theologie-Historique* series in France published a number of important monographs on St. Maximus and his spiritual master, St. Sophronius of Jerusalem. These are Christoph von Schönborn's *Sophrone de Jérusalem: Vie Monastique et Confession dogmatique*, Alain Riou's *Le Monde et L'Eglise selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Francois-Marie Léthel's *Théologie de L'Agonie du Christ; La Liberté Humaine du Fils de Dieu et son Importance Soteriologique mises en lumière par Saint Maxime Confesseur*, Pierre Piret's *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Jean-Miguel Garrigues' *Maxime le*

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42. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, p. 15.

43. Ibid.

Confesseur: La Charité avenir divin de l'homme. In Germany in 1965, Walther Völker published his exhaustive study *Maximus Confessor als Meister des Geistlichen Lebens.* Finally, in 1979, a major study appeared in Greek by Nikos Matsoukas entitled *World, Man and Communion According to Saint Maximus the Confessor,*[44] and Lars Thunberg published a valuable precis of his earlier work entitled *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor.*

This is a significant list, for of all the modern works and studies of St. Maximus is the third period, all but one are by western authors, that is to say, by non-Orthodox authors, and, with the exception of Thunberg's two works, all of the most significant and recent studies are by Roman Catholics. There is, in other words, a certain latent trend in Maximian studies that does not seem, to this author, altogether healthy nor without its problems and repercussions: if one accepts a view of the divine simplicity as being an absolute definition of the divine essence, the distinction between the essence and the attributes fades to such an extent that the attributes even become ontologically identical with each other. If, on the other hand, one does *not* accept this model of the divine simplicity, one will also maintain that the distinction between the essence and energies of God is real and formal, and that the energies cannot be identified with each other. Therefore, when one is confronted by a passage in Maximus which can speak both of the plurality of energies and yet of the divine simplicity, one's interpretation of such a passage will be influenced to a large extent by what presuppositions one already has concerning the simplicity of the divine essence. Not surprisingly, then, St. Maximus' references to the divine energies have been the focus of some debate between Roman Catholic and Orthodox scholars.

The approach taken in this essay is somewhat different, and therein lies what I believe to be its unique perspective. It is argued that St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice is an *eschatological* one, that is to say, the Confessor maintains that there is a real free choice - and not just freedom - for the saints in the eschaton, and yet that there is no possibility of their sinning. It is argued that Palamism is the *result* of this doctrine of free choice, rather than its *presupposition.* Free choice, as used in the following pages, is

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44. Fr. Dmitru Staniloae has also written introductions to the modern Greek translations of St. Maximus' *Mystagogia* and *Ambigua*, Athens, 1978.

conceived therefore in terms of two basic models. The first, the doctrine that St. Maximus wishes to establish, is the activity of choosing various courses of action, the activity of directing the will to choose amongst several objects. One must be careful to distinguish here between the *power of choice* as a property of nature, and the *activity of using it.* The two, while related concepts, are not identical. Free choice implies not only the ability to choose, but, for St. Maximus, the actual activity of choosing itself. To say, then, that the saints have free choice in eternity is not merely to say that the power of choice still remains in their nature, but also that their wills are active, that they use their power of choice, or in other words, that they freely choose. What is therefore primarily in view in this model, as we shall come to see, is the multiplicity of the objects of choice. The second model of free choice, the model which St. Maximus wishes to exclude in the eschatological situation of the saints in heaven, conceives of free choice as being somehow conditioned by a moral dilemma, by a dialectic of good and evil. The burden of this essay is thus to show that for St. Maximus the two models are not the same thing, and to show how he comes to separate these two models or concepts of free choice which had, by his time, become confused. For the second model, then, metaphysical distinctions between the objects of choice involve some degree of moral relativity and opposition; choices are either good or evil, more or less good, "better" or "worse". The Confessor's outlook, being primarily theological, christological and eschatological, does not see this model of free choice as the exclusive or even the most fundamental way of viewing free choice.

Our focus in the subsequent chapters is not, therefore, primarily an anthropological one, but a much broader and more metaphysical one. We shall attempt to survey the various reasons behind the confusion of these two models and the basic conditions that make the Confessor's doctrine possible.

The essay is divided into two sections, the first comprising chapters one through four, the second chapters five through eight and the appendix. Chapter 2 deals chiefly with the metaphysical background of the Confessor's doctrine of free choice by examining the Neoplatonic and Origenist cosmologies. Chapter 2 is the first articulation of all the themes that will recur, in different contexts and combinations, throughout the rest of the essay. It is argued that the model of the divine simplicity put forward by Plotinus and

adopted by Origen involves an absolute ontological identity between essence and will. It is then argued that this definition of simplicity is in turn derived from a dialectic of oppositions, and that this dialectic, in turn, confuses the principle of multiplicity with that of a dialectic between good and evil; distinction equals moral opposition. In Chapter 3, the monothelete background of the Confessor's doctrine is surveyed, being organized around its three guiding principles: that of non-contradiction, i.e. that all opposition must be strictly excluded in Christ; that of the will as hypostatic, and that what is natural is compelled. In Chapter 4, the results of Part One are greatly condensed and summarized. Part One thus deals exclusively with the background of the Confessor's doctrine of free choice.

Part Two deals with the Confessor's doctrine itself. Chapter 5 constitutes an examination of the *psychological* aspect of his doctrine of eschatological free choice for the deified humanity of the saints and of Christ. Chapter 6 concentrates upon the *ontological* and *relational* aspects of his doctrine. The ontological section concerns itself with a description of the objects of choice which the saints are able to choose in the eschaton. It is argued that these objects are precisely the divine and uncreated *logoi* of God. The next section describes the manner in which creatures relate to these objects, i.e., it describes the type of motion which creatures will have towards these objects. Chapter 7 constitutes an examination of the Confessor's refutation of the three principles of Monotheletism in the light of the principles enunciated in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 8 summarizes the results of the essay in the form of a precis of the Confessor's doctrine of free choice, with specific reference to the implications of the results of this essay to the question of whether Maximus is best read from within a Palamite or a Thomist perspective. Finally, in Chapter 9, the appendix, a few tentative suggestions are offered as to the implications of the Confessor's doctrine in the wider ecumenical context. These implications are briefly explored by applying his principles to the western disputes on predestination and free will.

A brief word must be said here about the translations. I have tried, wherever possible, to use existing English translations, modifying those portions which I felt to be, not necessarily inaccurate, but weak renderings. It is difficult indeed to convey the forcefulness and subtlety of the Confessor's labyrinthine Greek prose into English. In the case of translations of the *First Opuscule*

of the *Theological and Polemical Works*, and of the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, the translations are my own.

In this case, words occurring between brackets, [], have been added to clarify the text, or, in some cases, to supply words that St. Maximus simply does not supply.

A further word must be added here concerning the absence of any mention of Evagrius Ponticus or St. (Pseudo-) Dionysius. In the case of Evagrius, the texts survive in an incomplete form, and even then the expression is obscure. Evagrius, from the logical and dialectical approach assumed throughout this essay, does not contribute anything significant to Origenism, and it is thus much simpler to rely upon the *First Principles* of Origen himself. With Dionysius the case is somewhat different. Here it is the complexity of his own views and their proper interpretation which precludes any mention of him in this essay. Is he, for example, a Christian Neoplatonist, or does he use neoplatonic language, in effect, to kill Neoplatonism? This question alone would, and has, consumed volumes, but would be rendered even more complex from the historiographical and doctrinal standpoint if one were to turn to a consideration of the relationship of his views, however interpreted, to the teachings of those after him. I have thought it best, therefore, in the interests of clarity, to avoid complicating an already complex essay with any mention of Dionysius.

It is no accident that an appendix on St. Augustine and St. Maximus should accompany the essay, for as will become increasingly obvious, St. Maximus is in fact grappling with the problem of predestination and free will, of nature and of grace. It is hoped, therefore, upon completion of the study and the appendix, that the reader will have an appreciation of the greatness of St. Maximus the Confessor and the matchless profundity of his thought and its continuing, perhaps even urgent, relevance in the ecumenical context of the twentieth century. It is hoped that the reader will then agree, as does this author, with the statement of Le Guillou, that "Maximus deserves to be known as the equal of Augustine. He is truly situated at one of the more decisive turning points of Christian thought."[45]

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45. Riou, *Le Monde et L'Eglise*, p. 11. The remarks are those of M.-J. Le Guillou in the introduction.

Chapter 2

The Plotinian and Origenist Background

The nature of the One and its act as the One must be wholly indistinguishable.... In fact the will of the One and its essence (οὐσία) *are identical.*

J. M. Rist, Plotinus: The Road to Reality[1]

There are, in fact, two different sets of names which may be used of God. One set of names refers to God's deeds or acts - that is, to his will and counsel - the other to God's own essence and being.

Georges Florovsky,
"St. Athanasius' Concept of Creation"[2]

I. Introduction

When reading Plotinus, one always has the sense that one has missed something, that some subtle relationship between the various components of his philosophy has been overlooked or inadequately comprehended, for it is a philosophy both of the metaphysical description of reality, a doctrine of the spiritual and contemplative life of the mystic, and a significant attempt to relate these two emphases. It is, therefore, a rich and richly ambivalent philosophy.[3]

This ambivalence is in part due to the unsystematic nature of Plotinus' writings, the *Enneads*, themselves, and in part due to the sheer scope of his philosophical goal which was to show that "the demonstrations of the Good... are also the means of raising ourselves to it."[4] The *Enneads* themselves are, in the suggestive

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1. J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, pp. 77, 79.

2. Georges Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History*, Vol. IV of *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, p. 52.

3. cf. Émile Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, pp. 32, 41-42, 43.

4. *Enneads* I:3:1, cited by Bréhier, p. 33.

illustration of Émile Bréhier, rather like the stenographic report of the philosophical debates which he and his friends held.[5] They do not present his philosophy "part by part in a series of treatises" but explain his "entire doctrine from the point of view of the subject under consideration."[6] Nor is Plotinus' conceptual clarity aided by the fact that he took little care to revise and edit his writings or to observe correct grammar and spelling.

But there are formal inconsistencies as well, stemming from the conflict "between a religious representation of the universe, that is to say, a representation which gives meaning to our destiny, and a rationalistic representation which seems to do away with all meaning in anything like the individual destiny of the soul."[7] A. H. Armstrong aptly describes these two representations in a summary of the main components of Plotinus' philosophy:

> The philosophy of Plotinus is an account of an ordered structure of living reality, which proceeds from its transcendent First Principle, the One or Good, and descends in an unbroken succession of stages from the Divine Intellect and the Forms therein through Soul with its various levels of experience and activity to the last and lowest realities, the forms of bodies; and it is also a showing of the way by which the soul of man which belongs to, can experience and be active on every level of being, is able, if it will, to ascend by a progressive purification and simplification to that union with the Good which alone can satisfy it. There are two movements in Plotinus' universe, one of outgoing from unity to an ever-increasing multiplicity and the other of return to unity and unification: and, related to his conception of these two movements but not entirely corresponding to them, there is a duality and tension in his own thought.[8]

It is beyond the scope of this essay to survey comprehensively each of these components - the One or the Good, the intellect, the soul, and the processes leading to their origin from and return to the One - and therefore our attention will be focused instead upon that aspect of Plotinus' philosophy which, in the words of Bréhier, "has given rise to the greatest differences in interpretation,"[9] the doctrine of the Absolute, the First Principle,

5. Bréhier, *Plotinus*, p. 25.
6. Ibid., p. 26.
7. Ibid., p. 42.
8. A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, p. 26.
9. Bréhier, *Plotinus*, p. 133.

or what Plotinus calls "the One." We will discuss two very basic concepts of the One - Its utter and ineffable transcendence of all categories and concepts of being, and Its reduction of those very same categories and concepts to absolute unity - in relation to the following themes which will occupy us throughout the remainder of the essay: the dialectic of oppositions and the theme of multiplicity, free choice and necessity, and the spatial imagery which Plotinus utilizes to describe the soul's and the intellect's contemplation of the One as being a motion "around" the One.

II. The One

Plotinus has a keen sense of utter transcendence in his doctrine of the One. All terminology used of it is inaccurate, strictly speaking, due to its sheer and utter transcendence of any categories of being or language that one could ascribe to it:

> But if we must introduce these names for what we are seeking, though it is not accurate to do so, let us say again that, speaking accurately, we must not admit even a logical duality in the One.... We must be forgiven the terms we use, if in speaking about Him in order to explain what we mean, we have to use language which we, in strict accuracy, do not admit to be applicable. *As if* must be understood with every term.[10]

All predications are in the final analysis, therefore, inapplicable to the One, since they are anterior to Its transcendence and dependent upon It:

> Since the nature of the One produces all things It is none of them. It is not a thing or quality or quantity or intellect or soul: It is not in motion or at rest, in place or time, but exists within Itself, a unique Form; or rather It is formless, existing before all form, before motion, before rest, for these belong to being and make It multiple.[11]

And again:

> It is not thought for there is no otherness in It. It is not movement, but prior to movement and thought. For what would It think about? Itself? But then It would be ignorant before Its thought, and would need thought to know Itself, It which is self-sufficient.'

10. *Enneads* VI:8:13, p. 53 of Armstrong, *Plotinus*. Page references, unless otherwise noted, refer to the translations of the Enneads given in A. H. Armstrong, *lotinus*.
11. Ibid., VI:9:3, p. 55.

> There is no ignorance in It because It does not know or think Itself, because ignorance is always of something else, when one of two things does not know the other.[12]

The One therefore transcends motion, rest, space, time, activity, thought, and will. In short, anything that *might* be predicated of the One *cannot* be predicated of the One.

What, then, does Plotinus mean when he himself calls the First Principle of his philosophy "the One" even in these passages where he is at great pains to deny all predications to It? Plotinus himself asks this question.

> What then do we mean by 'One', and how do we fit this Unity into our thought? 'One' is used in more senses than that of the unity of a numerical unit or a point: in this sense the soul, taking away magnitude and numerical plurality, arrives at the smallest possible and rests on something which is certainly without parts, but belongs to the divisible and exists in something else. But the One is not in something else or in the divisible, nor is It without parts in the sense of the smallest possible. For It is the greatest of all things, not in size but in power.... It must be considered as infinite, not by unlimited extension of size or number but by the unboundedness of Its power.[13]

Dean Inge observes that the One cannot, for Plotinus, be given a merely numerical sense because in this sense "unity and plurality are correlatives, so that we cannot have one without the other."[14] The One is Absolute Unity Itself.

In considering this conception of the One's transcendence, we must look at two related ideas, dialectic and simplicity. For Plotinus, dialectic

> is the science which can speak about everything in a reasoned and orderly way, and say what it is and how it differs from other things and what it has in common with them; in what class each thing is and where it stands in that class, and if it really is what it is, and how many really existing things there are, and again how many non-existing things, different from real beings. *It discusses good and not good, and the things that are classed under good and its opposite, and what is eternal and not eternal*, with certain knowledge about everything and not mere opinion.[15]

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12. Ibid., VI:9:6, p. 58.
13. Ibid., pp. 56-57.
14. Dean William Ralph Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. II, p. 108.

Dialectic is a method, therefore, of defining or of making distinctions between a thing and another thing by means of the principle of opposition. "Distinction," says Plotinus in another place, "is opposition."[16] We shall have occasion later in this essay to observe the ramifications of this fusion between the concepts of distinction and opposition. Here, however, it is sufficient to note that in Plotinus' hands what was a methodological tool is also the means to bring all distinct realities - that is to say, primarily the intellect and the soul - to the absolute One. Dialectic is the means not only of *demonstrating* the Good but of *attaining* it.[17] The dialectic must consequently

> not be thought to be a tool the philosopher uses. It is not just bare theories and rules; it deals with things and has real beings as a kind of material for its activity; it approaches them methodically and possesses real things along with its theories.[18]

It is thus the means of ascending through various degrees of numerical unity which must always imply some degree of presence of its dialectical opposite, namely plurality.[19] But this very dialectical tension also implies that "as the path to reality is a progress from lower unities to higher unities, there must be, at the top of the ascent, an absolute unity, a perfect simplicity, above all differentiation."[20] Paradoxically, dialectical opposition leads to that which is beyond all duality, distinction, and opposition.[21] It implies a unit of measure absolutely beyond any and all units of measure.[22] As Émile Bréhier observed, Plotinus has in a certain sense transformed the dialectic from a method into a metaphysical reality.[23] The dialectic must be sharply contrasted to mere logic which is simply a "practical technique which deals only with the propositions and rules of reasoning." Dialectic is rather "a natural

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15. *Enneads* I:3:4, pp. 128-129.
16. Ibid., III:2:16, p. 99 of the Loeb Classical Library Text, Trans. A. H. Armstrong.
17. Ibid., I:3:1.
18. Ibid., I:3:5, p. 161, Loeb text.
19. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. II, p. 108.
20. Ibid., p. 109.
21. Ibid., pp. 108-109.
22. Bréhier, *Plotinus*, pp. 134-135.
23. Ibid., p. 141.

science which bears upon realities."[24] It leads from the soul, in which things are distinguished from each other, through the intellect, in which there is a mixture of plurality and unity in a kind of "plurality-in-unity", to the One, which includes everything yet which has no distinctions.[25]

That to which the dialectic leads is the absolute "simplicity" of the One. We have seen that Plotinus uses the strongest possible language to affirm the absolute transcendence of the One, placing it beyond all categories of language and thought. The One is even beyond being itself:

> But it is impossible to apprehend the One as a particular thing; for then It would not be the Principle but only that particular thing which you said It was.... Since It is none of them, It can only be said to be beyond them. Now these things are beings, and being: so It is 'beyond being.' This phrase 'beyond being' does not mean that It is a particular thing - for it makes no positive statement about It. 'Beyond being' is not Its name; all that it implies is that It is 'not this.'[26]

The phrase "beyond being" contains an inherent ambiguity, however. On the one hand, it indicates a negative, or apophatic, approach is being taken with regard to the One because the One is utterly transcendent; one can never truly say what the One is, only what It is not; It is "not this." Nothing whatsoever can truly be said about It. On the other hand, however, the presence of the term "being" in the phrase "beyond being" implies that something, after all, is being said about it. J. M. Rist observes that "in view of the general Greek use of 'being' to mean finite being, the *prima facie* meaning of the phrase 'beyond being' should be 'infinite being.' "[27] Plotinus puts it somewhat differently. "Being," he says, "is a compound. No being is simple."[28] To be a being means precisely that something is compound or complex, that it may be "broken down into components... for example, man into soul and body, and the body into four elements."[29] In other words, to say that something is a being is to say that it is composed of various

24. *Enneads*, I:3:4, cited Bréhier, *Plotinus*, pp. 103-104.
25. cf. Bréhier, *Plotinus*, p. 46.
26. *Enneads*, V:5:6, Loeb text, p. 73.
27. Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 25.
28. *Enneads*, V:9:3, cited Bréhier, *Plotinus*, p. 88.
29. Ibid., cited Bréhier, *Plotinus*, pp. 88-89.

distinctions, so that one may paraphrase or amend Rist's statement that in view of Plotinus' general view that "being" means a complex being composed of constituent distinctions, the *prima facie* meaning of the phrase "beyond being" should be "being where there are no distinctions."

And this is indeed the language that Plotinus uses of the One:

> Now it has been made clear to us that the nature of the Good is simple and primary (for everything which is not primary is not simple either), and contains nothing in Itself, but is a unity: the same nature belongs to what we call the One. It is not something else, and then as a result of that One, nor is the Good something else and then as a result Good. When we speak of the One and when we speak of the Good we must think and speak of It as one and the same nature, not applying any predicates to It, but explaining It to ourselves as best we can. We call It the First because It is the simplest, and the Self-Sufficing because It is not a compound (which would make It dependent on Its constituent parts).... If then It is not... any sort of compouhd, there cannot be anything above It. We need not then go looking for other Principles.[30]

And so Plotinus returns to the crucial conception of simplicity. To call the One "simple" is not to give It a positive nature. Rather, the One's simplicity is, in the very apt phrase of Paul Tillich, "the abyss of everything specific."[31] "Simplicity" is therefore a term of negation of the manifold, of plurality, of distinction, of multiplicity.[32] Thus, to say that the One is simple means for Plotinus that there can be no ultimate and irreducible multiplicities, that there can be no transcendental distinctions in the Transcendent.

This reveals an inherent ambiguity in the conception of the simplicity of the One. On the one hand, "simplicity" indicates that the One is beyond all the distinct categories by which composite being is described, and yet it also paradoxically indicates the identification of these categories with each other in their mutual reduction to the One's absolute unity. The One is not only beyond

30. *Enneads*, II:9:1, p. 49.
31. Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, p. 53.
32. cf. *Enneads*, VI:9:3, p. 55.

being, activity, and will, but being, activity, and will (since the One is absolutely One and simple) are identical in it:

> He gives Himself being, since He is a self-dwelling activity and His supreme object of love is like an intellect; now intellect is an act; therefore He is an act, but not the act of another. So He is His own act, and is what He is not by chance but according to His own activity.... So He is not 'as He happened to be,' but as He Himself wills. His will is not arbitrary or just as it happened: the will which wills the best is not arbitrary. That this self-directed inclination of His, which is as it were His activity and abiding in Himself, makes His being what It is is shown by assuming the contrary. For if He inclines to what is outside Himself, He will lose His essential being; so His essential being is His self-directed activity; and this is one with Himself.... His being then is self-caused, self-originated. He is not 'as He happened to be' but as He wills.[33]

Thus being, activity, and will are, to employ the phrase of Rist, "wholly indistinguishable."[34] The One is what It wills and wills what It is. It is absolutely Being, Will, and Activity because there can be nothing lacking, or external, to It.[35] Because the One is absolutely One, Being, Will, and Activity are absolutely the same Thing. There is a sense, then, in which Being, Activity, and Will are names for that One Something which cannot be named and in which those distinctions are no longer distinct, but identical to each other.

This leads to some interesting consequences. The One's perfection means that "everything which is multiple and not one is defective, since it is composed of many parts."[36] The absolute simplicity of the One means the consequent indistinguishability of Its Being and Will. And this indistinguishability in turn is a mark of Its perfection, a perfection which is productive:

> If the First is perfect, the most perfect of all, and the primal Power, It must be the most powerful of beings and the other powers must imitate It as far as they are able. Now when anything else comes to perfection we see that it produces, and does not endure to remain by itself, but makes something else. This is true not only of things which have choice but of things which grow and produce without choosing to do so.... How then could the Most Perfect, the First

33. Ibid., VI:8:16, p. 61.

34. Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 77, cf. *Enneads*, I:6:6, p.251 of the Loeb text: 'So for God the qualities of goodness and beauty are the same.'

35. cf. Inge, *Plotinus*, Vol. II, p. 113-114.

36. *Enneads*, VI:9:6, p. 57.

> Good, the power of all things, remain in Itself as if It grudged Itself or was unable to produce? How then could It still be the Principle?[37]

The One would not, in other words, be the One if It did not produce the multiplicity-in-unity of the intellect, and the multiplicity of the soul: It would not be the One if It did not, in short, produce the world. The Good has no choice to be productive precisely because Its being ever-productive is, as it were, the only good thing for It to do. In the words of R. T. Wallis, production is not "the result of a deliberate decision" on the part of the First Principle because decision and choice of any kind imply "hesitation between opposite courses.... It follows equally that it could neither fail to happen nor happen otherwise than it does."[38] As a result of this particular aspect of the One's simplicity, that aspect which emphasizes the absolute unity, as distinct from that aspect which emphasizes the One's transcendence of every category, freedom and free choice are to be distinguished. Free choice implies distinct things to choose, and since "distinction is opposition," this multiplicity of things to choose implies some sort of moral dilemma of opposition between good and evil. The One, being absolutely Good, has no distinctions of Being, Will, and Activity and therefore cannot choose. Paradoxically, therefore, the One's freedom also means that the One has no free choice.

There is a tension, therefore, in Plotinus' doctrine of the One; two primary emphases that are to some degree contradictory. On the one hand, the One transcends any system or category of language or of being. It is beyond being, beyond motion, beyond rest, beyond activity, beyond will; in short, It is beyond anything and everything. On the other hand, however, there is a different tendency to reduce whatever might be said about the One to an absolute unity and identity of all metaphysical categories. There is thus a kind of dialectical necessity for the One to transcend all the oppositions of the dialectic and all the distinct categories of being. In this second sense, then, the One is to some extent what It is only by standing in dialectical contrast to Its opposite: It is One in contrast to the multiplicity which It produces; It is simple in contrast to those things which are compound and composed of really distinct elements. It is in this sense that the One's

37. Ibid., V:4:1, pp. 63-64.

38. R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, p. 63.

simplicity is an essential characteristic and the dialectically necessary condition of Its transcendence. The One, having no distinction between Its Being, Activity, and Will, is Perfection Itself, and this perfection, this indistinguishability of its Being, Activity, and Will, means that It must produce the distinctions of composite being. There cannot be, and yet there must be, things like the One.[39] And however paradoxical and ambiguous it may seem to us, it is this utter simplicity and identity which is for Plotinus the condition of the One's transcendence and perfection.[40] Before leaving Plotinus we must, however, briefly examine the spatial imagery which he associates with the intellect and the soul in their contemplation of the One, as this imagery is also employed by St. Maximus for the very different purpose of asserting the heavenly and eschatological conditions of human free choice.

III. The "Spatial" Imagery of Contemplation: Motion "Around" the Good

The One, as we have seen, must be productive since It is perfect, and the two primary beings which It produces are the intellect and the soul. This production is a kind of descent, for it involves an increasing declension from unity and a corresponding increase in the presence of distinction and multiplicity. Once again, our concern is not to provide a complete exposition of all the concepts which Plotinus uses to describe this productivity in the descent of the intellect and the soul. Our interest is focused simply on highlighting the rich spatial imagery which Plotinus utilizes to describe the converse motion of these two beings back to the One. Our purpose is briefly to illumine the relationship that this imagery has to the first emphasis in his doctrine of the One, that of Its utter transcendence.

The intellect and the soul, and all multiplicities that they contain, form a type of eternal nature which exists "around" (περί) the One. This eternal nature is different from the One and is

39. *Enneads*, V:5:10, cited Bréhier, p. 159.

40. cf. Bréhier, *Plotinus*, pp. 158-159, 161.

> around the One (περὶ τὸ ἕν) and comes from it and is directed towards it, in no way going out from it but always abiding around it and living according to it.[41]

The One in its absolute transcendence neither moves nor rests, being beyond these categories. This provision has certain implications for the spatial imagery and its proper understanding which we are here considering. Plotinus is quite clear about the application of such imagery to the One Itself:

> We must not set Him in any place whatever, either as eternally resting and established in it or as an incomer, we must think of Him only as existing (the necessity of discussion compels us to attribute existence to Him), and of place and everything else as later than Him - place latest and last of all. Conceiving this Placeless Existence as we do, we shall not set other things round Him in a circle or be able to circumscribe Him and measure His dimensions; we shall not attribute quantity to Him at all, or quality either; for He has no form, not even intelligible form; nor is He related to anything else, for He exists in and by Himself before any other thing.[42]

Spatial imagery, being thus inapplicable to the One, rather reflects the degree to which the intellect and soul are concentrating upon, returning to, or contemplating the One.[43] The One, being beyond place, is therefore beyond rest and motion. The One is instead that power which

> causes motion and rest, so that it is beyond them, but the Second (i.e., the Intellect) is at rest and also in motion around the First; and Intellect is the sphere of the Second, for it is one thing and has its thought directed toward another, but the one does not have thought. So that which thinks is double, even if it thinks itself, and defective, because it has its good in thinking, not in its being.... Intellect is the real being, and there is movement here and rest. The First itself is not related to anything, but the other things are related reposing around it in their rest, and moving around it, for movement is desire.[44]

In this passage, the preposition "around" serves several different functions. First, it serves to highlight the One's transcendence, being beyond motion and rest. Secondly, it serves to indicate the One's distinction from all that is "around" It; in other words, it

41. *Enneads*, III:7:6, p. 313, Loeb text.

42. Ibid., VI:8:11, p. 54.

43. cf. Bréhier, *Plotinus*, pp. 194-195.

44. *Enneads*, III:9:7, pp. 415, 417, Loeb text.

illustrates the One's absolute unity in contrast to the surrounding multiplicity: "He is not a contingent attribute of other things but they of Him, or rather they stand around Him."[45] Thirdly, it serves to designate a kind of space which exists around the One in infinite extension, and this again is due to the One's absolute infinity. It is in this infinite "space" that the intellect and the soul move and rest "around" the One. Thus, fourthly, "around" describes the *kind of motion* that these objects have when they seek to attain the unattainable: being unable to attain to the One, they *move toward it*. But since the One is an infinite distance away, this motion *towards* the One is best described as a motion *around* the One.

> Body is naturally transported in a straight line and soul's natural tendency is to contain, and from both of them together there comes to be something which is both carried along and at rest. If circular motion is to be attributed to body, how can it be when all body, including fire, moves in a straight line? It moves in a straight line until it comes to its ordained place; for as it is ordained, so it appears both to rest naturally and to be conveyed to the place where it was ordained to be. Why, then, does it not stay still when it has come to heaven? It is, is it not, because the nature of fire is to be in motion. So if it does not move in a circle, going on in a straight line will dissipate it; so it must move in a circle.... It seeks to go in a straight line, but no longer has anywhere to go, so it glides round, we may say, and curves back in the regions where it can.... So it runs in the space it occupies and is its own place; it came to be there not in order to stay still but to move. The centre of a circle naturally stays still, but if the outside circumference stayed still, it would be a big centre. In this way, then, it will direct itself towards the centre, not by coinciding with it - that would abolish the circle - but since it cannot do that, by whirling around it; for in this way alone can it satisfy its impulse.[46]

While it is true that the main interest of the passage is in bodily motion, the same language is equally applied elsewhere to the intellect and soul specifically. As the soul is the center of the body, so in turn is the intellect the center of the soul:

> The soul has arisen from Intellect as a light around it and is immediately dependent on it and not in something else but around it, and has no place, for neither has Intellect.[47]

45. Ibid., VI:8:16, p. 61.
46. Ibid., II:2:1, pp. 43-45, Loeb text.
47. Ibid., V:3:9, pp. 100-103, Loeb text.

And as the intellect is the center of the soul's motion of contemplation, so in turn is the One the center for the motion of the Intellect's contemplation:

> This is how intellect is moved; it is both at rest and in motion; for it moves around Him (the Good). So, then, the universe, too both moves in its circle and is at rest.[48]

Consequently, the soul is ultimately centered in the One as well, because

> There must be a centre for soul as there is for body... because just as body is around its centre, so is soul. If it is the centre of soul that is in question, soul runs around God and embraces him lovingly and keeps round him as far as it can; for all things depend on him: since it cannot go to him, it goes round him.[49]

The world of intellect and the soul which the One produces is thus rather like a series of ever expanding concentric circles.[50] We shall encounter this spatial imagery again in St. Maximus. Here it is important to recall that this imagery has as its primary goal to highlight the One's utter transcendence from the distinct intellect and soul by setting the latter two off in a kind of infinite and circular space. "Around" thus highlights several things: the infinity of the One, the infinity of the "space" around It; and the distinctness of the space itself from the One.

IV. Summary

All the major themes that will form the focal point of our discussion throughout the remainder of this chapter, and indeed, throughout the remainder of the entire essay, have now been articulated. We have discovered that there is a certain ambivalence and tension, a duality of emphases, in Plotinus' doctrine of the One and Its transcendence. On the one hand, It is beyond every category of speech or being which one *might* attribute to It. On the other hand, the One is also the very identification of those categories. Specifically this means that It is altogether beyond being, will, and activity, but also, in the second sense, *is* Being, Will, and Activity to such an extent that these

48. Ibid., II:2:3, p. 51, Loeb text.
49. Ibid., II:2:2, p. 47, Loeb text.
50. cf. Inge, *Plotinus*, Vol. I, pp. 122-123.

categories have become identical with each other. For Plotinus, these two emphases are paradoxically conditioned by each other. Our attention in the remaining pages will, however, be focused upon the second aspect of this doctrine of the One in Its utter simplicity, upon that emphasis which models the One's simplicity in terms of a reduction of all distinct metaphysical categories to an absolute ontological identity amongst themselves. Our attention will thus be concentrated upon this model of the simplicity, where there is no longer any distinction between being, will, and activity, where there is indeed no sense whatever of absolute, transcendental, irreducible multiplicity and distinction. This second emphasis or model of the simplicity we shall have occasion to refer to under a variety of names, depending upon what point of the model is in view. Most often it is simply called the "Plotinian" or even "neoplatonic" definition of simplicity. Elsewhere it is sometimes referred to as the "functional" or even "definitional" model, that is to say, the strictly limiting conception of simplicity. Behind all these names, however, is the model of simplicity which identifies being, will, activity, and whatever else may be said of the One, or of divinity, in an absolute and ontological identity.

It was also shown why, on the basis of this second understanding of simplicity, the One had to create and produce the world of multiplicity. Since "Being equals Will equals Activity" in this model, "perfection also equals production." There are thus certain logical ramifications implicit in the definitional model of simplicity which entail a distinction between freedom and free choice. Free choice, implying distinct objects from which to choose, and distinction implying moral opposition,[51] means that the One, being beyond all distinctions and oppositions and so utterly One that its Will and Being and Activity are all "wholly indistinguishable,"[52] has no free choice. It is rather free from the necessity of free choice. We are thus face to face with yet another paradoxical aspect of Plotinus' system, for free choice and freedom are distinct from each other. The one does not imply or even condition the other in any absolute sense. Rather, freedom is to be free from free choice.

51. cf. Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 137, Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 62-63.

52. Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 77.

Finally, Plotinus employs a spatial imagery to describe the goal of the soul's and intellect's motion to the One. By moving towards the unattainably transcendent One, and being unable to achieve It, they move "around" the center of their attention. The One is, in this view (and to employ a mathematical metaphor), the asymptotic limit of the motion of the intellect and the soul. The intellect and the soul are in an infinite motion in an infinite space infinitely removed from the center of an infinitely extended circle around which they move. This spatial imagery is an essential image of the One's transcendence and of the soul's and intellect's derivation from, and ultimate return to, the One. We shall encounter this imagery again in St. Maximus, but in a far different, Christian context where it is employed to illustrate and assert the eschatological free choice of the saints. But before we can adequately survey its use in St. Maximus, we must first further explore the occurrence of this imagery and its accompanying themes of simplicity and free choice in their first encounter with a specifically Christian context, the thought of Origen. It is the presence of this new element, Christianity, which gives rise to further questions with which the Confessor will have to contend.

V. Simplicity, Dialectic, and the Origenist Problematic

In this section, we shall be concerned primarily not with the Origen of the commentaries on Scripture, nor even with the Origen of the *Contra Celsum*, but with the Origenism of *On the First Principles*, for it is this latter Origenism that is subsequently condemned, in its Evagrian systematization, by the Fifth Ecumenical Council, and it is this Origenism which nonetheless persistently maintains its appeal up to the time of St. Maximus the Confessor, who deals it its final and decisive blow of refutation. It is in the Origenism of *On the First Principles* that the problem of free choice and predetermination are first posed within a comprehensive and systematic theological framework. This framework is a problematical fusion of various Christian and Middle Platonic elements, and not surprisingly yields problematical results and implications for his conception of free choice and predetermination. I deliberately refrain from including the adjectives *human* and *divine* when referring to free choice and

predetermination, for in the systematic framework of *On the First Principles* the problem is not a problem between deity and humanity, but a problem within deity itself which subsequently leads to similar problems in humanity. It is from the outset almost completely a theological, and as we will see, eschatological problem.

A word needs to be said here about the appropriateness of a comparison between Plotinus and Origen. As Origen was not familiar with the works of Plotinus, and derives his platonising tendencies largely from the Middle Platonists, this comparison may seem overly contrived and artificial. However, we are not here concerned so much with historical dependencies as with logical and dynamic similarities between two systems - the one philosophical, the other theological - which were both derived independently from Middle Platonism. It is this fact which makes such a comparison all the more enlightening.

For Origen, as for Plotinus, God was simple:

> Among all intellectual, that is incorporeal things, what is there so universally surpassing, so unspeakably and immeasurably excelling, as God, whose nature certainly the vision of the human mind, however, pure or clear to the very utmost that mind may be, cannot gaze at or behold? ...God therefore must not be thought to be any kind of body nor to exist in a body, but to be a *simple intellectual existence*, admitting in himself of no addition whatever, so that he cannot be believed to have in himself a more or a less, but is *Unity*, or if I may so say, *Oneness throughout*, and the mind and fount from which originates all intellectual existence or mind.[53]

Like Plotinus' One, Origen's conception of the simplicity of the divine nature is strictly definitional and metaphysical, for

> that simple and wholly mental existence can admit no delay or hesitation in any of its movements or operations; for if it did so, the simplicity of its divine nature would appear to be limited and impeded by such an addition, and that which is the first principle of all things would be found to be *composite and diverse, and would be many and not one*; since only the species of deity, if I may so call it, has the privilege of existing apart from all material intermixture.[54]

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53. Origen, *On the First Principles*, I:1:5-6, p. 10. All citations are from the English translation of the Koetschau edition, trans. G. W. Butterworth.

54. Ibid., I:1:6, pp. 10-11, emphasis mine.

As it did for Plotinus, so the definition of the divine essence in terms of simplicity admits of no composition or diversity in the Good for Origen. Diversity and composition are consequently, for Origen as for Plotinus, properties of material things. But for Origen, as not for Plotinus, this leads to special problems, or rather to a particular problem, that of the relationship between the Creation of the world and the Generation of the Word. This problem we may call "The Origenist Problematic."

In Plotinus' thought, the One is what It wills, and what the One wills is what the One does; being, will, and activity are identical. In so far as they are distinct, they are so only within the human diversified intelligence, and thus the terms "being", "will", and "activity" have no independent ontological status within the One; they indicate no ontologically distinct realities within God. This problem is reproduced by Origen in a very famous statement: speaking of God as both Father and Creator, Origen says,

> Now as one cannot be a father apart from having a son, nor a lord apart from holding a possession or a slave, so we cannot even call God almighty if there are none over whom he can exercise his power. Accordingly, to prove that God is almighty we must assume the existence of the universe. For if anyone would have it that certain ages, or periods of time, or whatever he cares to call them elapsed during which the present creation did not exist, he would undoubtedly prove that in those ages or periods God was not almighty, but that he afterwards became almighty from the time when he began to have creatures over whom he could exercise power.... But if there was no time when he was not almighty, there must always have existed the things in virtue of which he was almighty; and there must have always existed things under his sway, which own him as their ruler.[55]

In a manner almost identical with its occurrence in Plotinus, the definition of simplicity has introduced an accompanying dialectic of oppositions into Origen's system: as God is simple, so creation is manifold and composite, and, furthermore, the very creatures which are not almighty stand over against the Almighty so that He can indeed *be* Almighty.

> We can therefore imagine no moment whatever when that power was not engaged in acts of well-doing. Whence it follows that there always existed objects of this well-doing, namely, God's works or creatures, and that God, in the power of his Providence, was always

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55. Ibid., I:2:10, pp. 23-25. Origen does suggest alternative views, cf. I:2:4, I:3:3, I:4:5.

> dispensing his blessings among them by doing good in accordance with their condition and deserts. It follows plainly from this, that at no time whatever was God not Creator, nor Benefactor, nor Providence.[56]

The simplicity is unyielding in its demands that all names of God be treated in exactly the same manner, and thus "the title of Almighty cannot be older in God than that of Father."[57] And so Origen comes to state his Problematic in its most definitive form:

> Let the man who dares to say 'There was a time when the Son was not' understand that this is what he will be saying, 'once wisdom did not exist, and word did not exist, and life did not exist.'[58]

Once more the being, activity, and will of God are identified to the point that "the Father's image is reproduced in the Son, whose birth from the Father is as it were *an act of his will proceeding from the mind.*"[59] Origen explains this point in reference to the Holy Spirit in the sixth chapter of the second book of his *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*:

> But we must inquire whether, if it be true that 'all things were created through him,' the Holy Spirit also was created through him. Now I think we are forced to admit to the man who says that he was created, and who quotes the text, 'All things were created through him,' that the Holy Spirit was created through the Word, since the Word is older than he. But the man who is unwilling to say that the Holy Spirit is created through Christ must assert that he is begotten.... We, however, believe that there are three hypostases, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and being of the opinion that no one is unbegotten except the Father, maintain the pious and true belief to be that while all things were created through the Word the Holy Spirit is of more honour than all others and first in rank of all who have been created by the Father through Christ.[60]

The Holy Spirit, and by implication the Word as well, are both created by the Father and in turn create other things ranked beneath them. So faithful has Origen been to the definition of simplicity that it would appear, in his ordering of the three divine

56. Ibid., I:4:3, p. 42.

57. Ibid., I:2:10, p. 24.

58. Ibid., IV:4:1. p. 315.

59. Ibid., I:2:6, p. 19.

60. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, II:10.

Hypostases, that the names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit have simply replaced the names of One, Nous, and World-Soul.

But to say this would in fact be to oversimplify the Origenist Problematic, for it is the presence of the distinctly *Christian* elements that make it unique. As Fr. Georges Florovsky observed, Origen has "failed to distinguish between the ontological and cosmological dimensions" of his system.[61] That is to say, the logical connection between the being of the created world and the eternal generation of the Son, a connection which is the result of the simplicity of the divine nature, has not been broken in the Origenist system.[62] And it is here that the dialectic of oppositions which accompanies the definition of simplicity surfaces in two very keen and acute forms, the one having to do with the free choice or election of God to create, and the other having to do with the aforementioned logical connection between the Creation of the world and the Generation of the Word.

We have seen that for Origen the "world is impossible without God" in such a manner that God is also "impossible without the world."[63] The definition of simplicity will admit of no plurality of goods in the divine. Free choice, considered in this context, since it must entail a choice between precisely such a plurality of distinct things, must be choice between opposite things. And since there is no plurality in the Good, in God, God therefore *must* create, for creation is the very condition of His goodness. And that is so because Creatorhood and Goodness are not distinct realities within God, but identical. God therefore cannot choose not to create since such a choice is by definition bound up in a moral dialectic, that of multiplicity; such a choice upon God's part would be, in a word, evil. This is an important, if not subtle, point, for it means that the principle of *multiplicity*, in this case a multiplicity in the objects of choice, is not yet distinguished from the principle of *contradiction* or *opposition*. Indeed, the two cannot be disentangled precisely because of the very nature of this particular model of understanding the divine simplicity; if the One is One only because of the many standing

61. Florovsky, *Aspects*, p. 42.

62. Ibid., citing V. V. Bolotov, *Origen's Doctrine of Holy Trinity* (St. Petersburg, 1879, in Russian), pp. 380-381.

63. Georges Florovsky, *Creation and Redemption*, Vol. III in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, pp. 55-56.

over against It, then the many are evil because of the Good, the One, standing over against them.

God therefore had to create, for it is impossible to conceive any higher good for Him than creation. It was for Arius to detect the dialectal opposites inherent in Origen's logical connection of the eternal generation with the eternal existence of the world. He made two major points:

> (a) the total dissimilarity between God and all other realities which 'had beginning' (a point made by Origen himself), beginning of any kind;
> (b) the 'beginning' itself. The Son had a 'beginning' simply because He was a son, that is - originated from the Father as His ἀρχή: only God (the Father) was ἄναρχος in the strict sense of the word.[64]

Thus, within the system of Origen "there were but two opposite options: to reject the eternity of the world or to contest the eternity of the Logos."[65] It was the latter option, of course, which was pursued by Arius.

The way out of the dialectical impasse was to refute the antecedent which had set it up: the definition of simplicity. This task fell to St. Athanasius, and he denies it thoroughly and utterly by drawing crucial and real distinctions - if not in terminology then at least in practice - between the divine essence and the divine hypostases, and, most importantly, the divine will. The logical dynamic of a proliferation of hypostases which was a trait of the Iamblichan school of Neoplatonism was inherent in the logic of Arianism as well, and St. Athanasius was quick to pick up this point; he conceded that if deity could be defined as being without principle in itself, and the principle of causation of the existence of others, that is, if the *personal* attribute of the Father, causality, could be confused with the essence so as to make it an *essential* attribute of deity, then it necessarily holds of the Son, if He is to be fully God,

> that as He is begotten, so He begets, and He too becomes the Father of a son. And again, He who is begotten from Him begets in his turn, and so on without limit; for this is to make the begotten like Him that begat Him.[66]

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64. Florovsky, *Aspects*, p. 47. The words "a point made by Origen himself" are my own.

65. Ibid., p. 46f.

Consequently, the Son would have to be "father of another, and so on in succession one from another, till the series they imagine grows into a multitude of Gods,"[67] if deity were so defined as causality. And deity could only be defined as causality, in the Christian context, if the personal attribute of the Father was, by some means, confused with the divine essence itself. The Son could only be begotten of both the Father's will and essence if the two were not really distinct, but identical. Thus, St. Athanasius' refutation of the Arian position depends ultimately upon denying this simplicity and its concomitant identity of essence and will.[68] That this distinction is a genuinely real distinction, and not merely a logical one, cannot be in doubt, for his whole refutation of Arianism and its underlying Origenist Problematic depended upon it.[69]

This interpretation of St. Athanasius may be resisted, however, for he does use the term "simplicity" approvingly in the *First Discourse Against the Arians*.

> God is not as man; for men beget passibly, having a transitive nature.... But with God this cannot be, for He is not composed of parts, but being impassible and Simple (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπαθὴς ὢν καὶ ἁπλοῦς), He is impassibly and indivisibly Father of the Son.[70]

And again, in *De Synodis*, he accuses the Arians of "shrinking from saying that God is truly Father, and thinking Him compound, in a bodily manner, who is simple."[71] Does this not indicate that St. Athanasius uses the same model of the divine simplicity as does Plotinus and Origen? And does this not mean that he has no real logical and metaphysical basis upon which to distinguish Persons, Will, and Essence within God? Does not St. Athanasius refer the revelation of the tetragrammaton in Exodus 3:14 and the *Shema Israel* in Deuteronomy 6:14, explicitly to the "very simple, and blessed, and incomprehensible *essence itself* of Him that is (τὴν ἁπλῆν καὶ μακαρίαν καὶ ἀκατάληπτον τοῦ ὄντος οὐσίαν)?"[72] Does

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66. St. Athanasius, *First Discourse Against the Arians*, IV:21, *The Nicene and ost-Nicene Fathers*, p. 319.

67. Ibid.

68. Florovsky, *Aspects*, p. 53.

69. Ibid., p. 61f.

70. St. Athanasius, *First Discourse*, VIII:28, PG 26:69B, p. 322.

71. St. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, 34, PG 26:753B, p. 469.

this not mean that, in the final analysis, Athanasius is himself a Platonist, and subject to the same dialectical dilemmas as Plotinus and Origen?

It does not.

We have seen that for Plotinus and Origen, essence and will, on their functional or definitional model of simplicity, are identical. The term simplicity thus becomes a strictly limiting definition of the divine essence and *functions* rather like an "equals" (=) sign in arithmetic, rendering the categories of essence and will logically and metaphysically identical. But for St. Athanasius, the distinction between nature and will is clear and, moreover, real:

> A man by counsel builds a house, but by nature he begets a son; and what is in building began to come into being at will, and is external to the maker: but the son is proper offspring of the father's essence, and is not external to him.... As far then as the Son transcends the creature, by so much does what is by nature transcend the will. *And they, on hearing of Him, ought not to measure by will what is by nature.*[73]

If St. Athanasius was as dependent upon either Plotinus, Origen, or even the Middle Platonists in his understanding and use of the term "simplicity" to the extent that is so often, and monotonously, suggested, it would have been logically impossible for him to maintain this distinction between will and nature in God. The occurrence of the term "simplicity" in St. Athanasius' writings is not therefore a summons to read into his anti-Arian works the whole development of platonic philosophy from Plato to Plotinus.

As a consequence of this, and in contrast to Origen's more "definitional" model of the simplicity of God, before whose immutability and goodness creation is an eternal necessity, St. Athanasius sets up a plurality in the Good, "*another kind* of eternity than the Divine essence."[74] The implication of this real and ontological distinction, this *plurality*, in God is to make creation an option, as it were, for His will, that is to say, creation is wholly and entirely an act of His *will* and is in no wise necessary to Him by any *essential* or *dialectical* necessity. It is because of this

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72. Ibid., 35, PG 26:753C, p. 469.

73. St. Athanasius, *Third Discourse Against the Arians*, 62, pp. 427-428.

74. Florovsky, *Creation*, p. 56.

distinction within Himself that God is both free to choose, and to remain good in that choice, not to create. Put differently, it is this distinction in the Good, which is God, which ensures that God is absolute goodness, under no necessity to create, and it is this plurality which also ensures that His will to create is the very revelation of His absolute goodness to creation. But having said these things does not yet exhaust all that is problematical in Origen's conception of free choice, for we have yet to consider this from the point of view of the creation and the creature itself.

VI. The Cosmic Process: Dialectic, Diversity, and Creaturely Free Choice

Origen's speculations on the divine will only give meaning to that concept within the context of a vast cosmological scheme of which it was but one element. The same is to be said for his doctrine of the will and free choice of the creature. The will of the creature is bound up in a vast cosmic process of preexistent rest, movement and (in what for Origen was almost synonymous with motion) a moral Fall, and finally, a return to the state of preexistent rest. The creature's will both determines this process and is in some sense determined by it, for the process is infinitely repeatable. This implies that for Origen the creature's will and the choices within its power are defined by this cosmic process to the near exclusion of all other considerations. In his explanation of human deformities and birth defects, Origen relies upon the doctrine that creaturely souls preexisted in a state with God, and that their deformities were in fact punishments for previous sin.

> Before the ages minds were all pure, both daemons and souls and angels, offering service to God and keeping His commandments. But the devil, who was one of them, since he possessed free-will, desired to resist God, and God drove him away. With him revolted all the other powers. Some sinned deeply and became daemons, others less and became angels; others still less and became archangels; and thus each in turn received the reward for his individual sin. But there remained some souls who had not sinned so greatly as to become daemons, nor on the other hand so very lightly as to become angels. God therefore made the present world and bound the soul to the body as a punishment.... For if... souls had no pre-existence, why do we find some new-born babes to be blind, when they have committed no sin, while others are born with no defect at all? But it is clear that certain sins existed before the

> souls, and as a result of these sins each soul receives a recompense in proportion to its deserts.[75]

This conception of the varying degrees of sin becomes Origen's explanation for the variety and distinctions in the created order:

> ...the cause of the diversity and variety among... beings is shown to be derived not from any unfairness on the part of the Disposer but from their own actions, which exhibit varying degrees of earnestness or laxity according to the goodness or badness of each.[76]

Origen puts the point more succinctly elsewhere.

> "Now since the world is so very varied and comprises so great a diversity of rational beings, what else can we assign as the cause of its existence except the diversity in the fall of those who decline from unity in dissimilar ways?"[77]

This should not be surprising, only God in His utter simplicity was absolutely Good. Any decline from simplicity and unity was therefore by definition a moral lapse. And this, too, is a part of the Origenist Problematic, for it taints any act of God *ad extra*, and particularly any act such as the Incarnation into human nature and a human body, with some degree of evil. On the other hand, creation itself, in all its diversity in opposition to that simple and unitary Good, must be flawed in some fundamental manner.[78]

This brings one to the problem of motion and free will in creatures. As God is simple and eternal, creatures are, in virtue of being creatures, mutable, in a constant state of becoming and motion:

> But since these rational beings, which... were made in the beginning, were made when before they did not exist, by this very fact that they did not exist and then began to exist they are of necessity subject to change and alteration.[79]

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75. Origen, *First Principles*, I:8:1, p. 67.

76. Ibid., I:8:2, p. 69.

77. Ibid., II:1:1, pp. 76-77.

78. N. B. Christ's human soul, however, is the one unfallen rational creature (λογικός) and is not evil.

79. Ibid., II:9:2, p. 130.

This mutability and motion on the part of creatures is nevertheless also a property of their free will and is thus the cause of their Fall from the Unity of God:

> ...the cause of the withdrawal will lie in this, that the movements of their minds are not *rightly and worthily directed.* For the Creator granted to the minds created by him the power of free and voluntary movement, in order that the good that was in them might become their own, since it was preserved by their own free will; but sloth and weariness of taking trouble to preserve the good, coupled with disregard and neglect of better things began the process of withdrawal from the good.[80]

There is nothing in these statements, considered in isolation from the rest of Origen's cosmology, that is not in harmony with patristic orthodoxy, save perhaps the vague allusions to the preexistence of souls; motion is quite clearly said to be an inherent creaturely condition; the creature's will is said to be the root of sin. The logical and structural association of motion with evil occurs only when one recalls the dialectical structuring of Origen's system. In that context, these affirmations take on another, more dangerous aspect, for if God is simple and immutable, then any definition of the creature's motion and free will must of necessity involve some notion of multiplicity, and hence, evil. To a certain extent, the creature is evil because it moves, and moves because it is evil. It does not move solely because it is a creature.

This point may best be illustrated by considering a highly significant passage in *On the First Principles* where Origen asks a question pregnant with implications that will only be fully explored by St. Maximus.

> It is certain that no living creature can be altogether inactive and immovable, but that it is eager for every kind of movement and for continual action and volition; and it is clear, I think, that this nature resides in all living beings. Much more then must a rational being such as man be always engaged in some movement or activity.... *So we seek to know whether in that life which is said to be 'hid with Christ in God,' that is, in the eternal life, there will be for us any such order or condition of existence.*[81]

In this passage, which must surely be one of the most important in all of patristic literature, Origen is asking, for the first time, whether man, as a rational creature, possesses motion and hence

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80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., II:11:1, p. 147.

the use of his power of choice in the eschaton. And it is important to stress the fact that he is asking this question strictly from the standpoint of man's *creaturely* motion and volition; there is not yet the slightest hint or suggestion that he is considering the question in terms of a *moral dialectic* between good and evil. Rather, he is considering creation as creation, and not as one element in an ordered structure of elements dialectically opposed to each other.

But once having brought himself to the verge of a great insight, he abandons the attempt to pursue it along the lines that his question suggested, for he seeks an answer to his non-dialectical question within the dialectic of oppositions. Expounding a doctrine of a "will in general," he says,

> Now some say, if to will is from God, and to work is from God, then even if we will badly and work badly, these come to us from God; and if this is so, we have no free will. Again, when we will what is better and work deeds that are excellent, since to will and to work are from God it is not we who have done the excellent deeds; we seemed to do them, but it was God who bestowed them on us, and so even in this we have no free will.
>
> In reply to this we must say that the statement of the apostle does not assert that to will what is evil is of God or that to will what is good is of God; nor that to work deeds that are better or worse is of God; but to will in general and to work in general. For as we have it from God that we are living beings and that we are men, so also we have from him the power of willing in general, as I said, and the power of movement in general.[82]

But the passage reaches a quite dialectical conclusion which illustrates just what Origen means by a "will in general."

> ...it is we who use the power of willing either for the noblest purposes or for the opposite ones, and likewise the power of working.[83]

The creature always possesses motion, and so,

> always possesses free will, both when in the body and when out of the body; and the will's freedom *always moves in the direction either of good or of evil, nor can the rational sense, that is, the mind or soul, ever exist without some movement either good or evil.*[84]

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82. Ibid., III:1:20, pp. 200-201.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., III:3:5, p. 228.

It is consequently this "will in general" which is peculiar to the creature, and it is peculiar to this "will in general" that it can always incline to either good or evil choices.

Origen's cyclic cosmology, with its potentiality for universal salvation and subsequent, potentially infinite recurring falls, is thus given an anthropological grounding in the creature's will. In contrast to God, Who is simple and Who *must* create, to God Who, because He is good, has no choice, the creature in its diversity has the power of "will in general." It is the creature whose will is defined by the dialectic of opposition. This dialectically conditioned plurality and diversity in the objects of its choice, like the plurality and diversity within created nature itself, is to some extent *logically* conditioned by evil, although Origen does not actually ever say this. Evil, however, does condition the very definition of free choice.

But once again Origen comes very close to making a very significant insight. Repeating his previous insight on the possibility of creaturely motion in the eschaton, he makes the additional fundamental observation that such creaturely motion in the eschaton would be *conditioned by the fact that it takes place in God.*

> Now I myself think that when it is said that God is 'all in all,' it means that He is also all things in each individual person in such a way that everything which the rational mind, when purified from all the dregs of its vices and utterly cleared from every cloud of wickedness, can feel or understand or think will be all God and that the mind will no longer be conscious of anything besides or other than God, but will think God and see God and hold God and *God will be the mode and measure of its every movement*; and in this way God will be all to it. *For there will no longer be any contrast of good and evil, since evil nowhere exists.*[85]

Origen is again on the verge of an important insight, anticipating St. Maximus in this regard, for he sees the creature's eschatological motion as being conditioned by God in such a way as not to take away the creature's activity and yet also in such a way that the creature is no longer capable of sin and evil. So prescient is Origen that he even sees that this implies a certain effect upon the creature's psychological processes, an insight subsequently elaborated by St. Maximus. But once again, being on the verge of a

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85. Ibid., III:6:3, p. 248.

great insight is not enough, for the motion which Origen's doctrine of God implies is itself dialectically conditioned.

> We are bound to believe as a logical consequence that where all are one there will no longer be any *diversity*. It is on this account, moreover, that the last enemy, who is called death, is said to be destroyed; in order, namely, that there may be no longer any sadness when there is no death nor diversity when there is no enemy. For the destruction of the last enemy must be understood in this way, not that its substance which was made by God shall perish, but that the hostile purpose and will which proceeded not from God but from itself will come to an end.[86]

Thus, diversity and evil are once again entangled. Ultimately, then, what Origen in the last two passages cited is attempting to say, and what his system is compelling him to say, are two different things. What he is attempting to say is that the rational and volitional creature has the property of movement and free volition in virtue of its *being* a creature, and, therefore, that movement and volition must continue even in eternity, but in a new mode conditioned by God. But what his system and dialectical conception of free choice is compelling him to say is that diversity and plurality in the objects of choice must cease (such diversity being dialectically entangled with the principle of evil), and therefore that choice ceases, there being *no possible ultimate diversity and plurality of final objects of choice in the eschaton because of God's simplicity*.

Here, then, is yet another aspect of the problematical nature of Origen's system, for when he does come yet again to consider what this doctrine of eschatological free choice means for the creature, the definition of simplicity and its accompanying definition of free choice in terms of the dialectic of oppositions forces Origen to admit the possibility of multiple falls after each general resurrection:

> But if what has been subjected to Christ shall in the end be subjected to God, then all will lay aside their bodies; and I think that there will then be a dissolution of bodily nature into non-existence, to come into existence a second time if rational beings should again fall.[87]

This leads Origen

86. Ibid., III:6:4-5, p. 250.

87. Ibid., II:3:3, p. 87.

> to the opinion that since, as we have frequently said, the soul is immortal and eternal, it is possible that in the many and endless periods throughout diverse and immeasurable ages it may either descend from the Highest good to the lowest evil or be restored from the lowest evil to the highest good.[88]

In other words, Origen has ruled out diversity in the motion of the creature in the eschaton, and hence, according to the dialectical dynamics of his system, ruled out its free choice as well. Yet when he returns to consider the creature as freely volitional and moving, he is aware that he cannot deny motion to the creature even in eternity. Because he cannot disentangle the principle of plurality and diversity from that of moral opposition to the good, he is left with a dilemma that he cannot solve. The motion of the creature in eternity, as defined dialectically, means ultimately that the creature, if capable of free choice in eternity, is also capable of innumerable lapses back into evil.

VII. Summary

There are consequently two aspects to the Origenist Problematic: there is a *divine* aspect which comes about because of his definition of the divine essence as simplicity. This admits of no distinction, and rather compels an identity, between God's essence, His activity, and His will. In God there is thus no real plurality or composition. There is also a *creaturely*, and more precisely, a *human* aspect to the Origenist Problematic, for within creation there is diversity. But this diversity and plurality is confused with the dialectic of oppositions: as God is simple and good, so creation is composite and, logically, evil, and nowhere is this confusion of the principle of diversity with the dialectics of opposition more in evidence than in Origen's thoughts on free choice. *The Origenist Problematic of the human will is that the concept of diversity in the objects of choice cannot be disentangled from the concept of moral oppositions between those objects*, much as, on a different plane, the generation of the Son cannot be disentangled from the creation of the world from the divine standpoint.

It was St. Athanasius who refuted the particular conception of the divine simplicity which underwrote these dilemmas by insisting upon a real and ontological distinction, a real plurality,

88. Ibid., III:1:23, p. 209.

in God consisting of His essence, the three Divine Persons, and His will. It remained for St. Maximus to take Origen's fundamental insight that free choice continues in the eschaton, and that such free choice was somehow conditioned by being "in God", and connect it with this formulation of the traditional Christian doctrine of God. In so doing, he disentangles the notion of a real diversity in the objects of free choice from the principle that such diversity is always and of necessity conditioned by a dialectic of moral oppositions.

And so the Origenist Problematic entailed both a divine aspect and a human aspect. It is therefore not surprising that when St. Maximus does consider the problem of free choice, the question posed to him, the means by which he answers it, and the answers that he arrives at, are all christological and, to the extent that St. Maximus is a Cyrillic Chalcedonian, trinitarian and eschatological as well.

Chapter 3

The Monothelete Background

It is impossible for two wills to coexist with each other in one person without opposition.

Pyrrhus of Constantinople[1]

Christ, therefore, came not to do his own will, but that of the Father; for his holy will was not derived from his humanity, but from his divinity.

Anselm of Canterbury[2]

I. Introduction

We turn now to consider the specifically Christological and polemical background to the Confessor's doctrine of free choice, Monotheletism. At first glance this doctrine has a certain appeal, for it seems to confirm what most people experience when they make a choice. Most would agree with the monothelete Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, that if Christ "is one person, then He willed as one person. And if He willed as one person then doubtless He has one will, and not two."[3] That is to say, most would agree that it is the individual *person* which is at the root of the will, and therefore at the root of free choices as well. Conversely, the opposing doctrine of Dyotheletism which was subsequently to become the dogma of the Church at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681) contains within it

> a difficulty... which would see the will as a function of the nature; for us it is easier to envisage the person as willing, asserting and imposing himself through his will. However, the idea of the person implies freedom vis-a-vis the nature. The person is free from nature, is not determined by it. The human hypostasis can only

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1. *DispPyr*, pp. 91:292A.

2. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* I:9 (in St. *Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans S. N. Deane, La Salle, Illimois: 1981), p. 196.

3. *DispPyr* 91:289A.

> realize itself by the renunciation of its own will, of all that governs us, and makes us subject to natural necessity.[4]

Monotheletism thus appears to harmonize rather well not only with what already seems to be a psychological truth but also with what Church doctrine teaches about the concept of hypostasis and self-renunciation. For this very reason it is a difficult doctrine to refute, demanding particular care and attention to the whole process of willing. This process is grounded by St. Maximus the Confessor in a vast inventory of theological and psychological distinctions. Consequently, our primary concern here shall be to survey the history and underlying metaphysical principles of Monotheletism which gave rise to these distinctions.

II. Historical Survey

The rise of Byzantine Monotheletism is a product of two factors, the first being the political circumstances occasioned by the Emperor Heraclius' reconquest of the lost provinces of the Roman Empire, Palestine and Egypt, and the second being the Cyrillic Chalcedonian theological climate of the age. The idea of Monotheletism in itself was not particularly new. It was

> evidently in the air in the late 6th century, since it is repudiated in a Palm Sunday sermon by Eulogius, Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria from 581 to 607.... It seems that Armenian theologians suggested that the divided churches might be reconciled if less stress were placed on the question of one or two natures in Christ and the idea of one 'operation', one 'theandric energy', were emphasized instead.[5]

One meets here what already distinguishes the peculiarly "Byzantine" version of Monotheletism from its Severian counterpart; it, far more than the monophysite version, was the product of a unique political circumstance and opportunity. Having recently reincorporated the lost provinces of the Empire, provinces in which there were significant majorities of Nestorians on the one hand and Monophysites on the other, Heraclius sought, through the powerful theological formulations of his Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, to reintegrate these provinces within the

4. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 122.

5. "Monotheletes" in *Westminster Dictionary of Church History*, p. 568. No author given.

imperial structure in a manner amenable to all concerned. And the formula of one "operation", or energy, suggested by the Armenians, appeared to have been the perfect solution.

The Patriarch Sergius, from the time of his election to the patriarchical throne of Constantinople on the 18th of April, 610, until his death in December, 638, was "the faithful and remarkable collaborator of the Emperor Heraclius... the perfect type of the great political statesman: intelligent, energetic, and courageous."[6] His tremendous theological dynamism was entirely directed towards one goal, that of

> a search for a possibility of a union between these separated Christians.... With the principal theologians of his time, both Catholics and Monophysites, he pursued a truly 'ecumenical dialogue' at the end of which a formula was disentangled: Christ had only one energy and one will.[7]

It was the flexibility of this formula which was its greatest appeal. Whereas Nestorianism had united two personal agents into one will, and the Monophysites preferred the Cyrillian formula "one co-natural energy in duality", there was one point upon which both parties seemed to agree and that was the fact of the one energy itself. This formulation of one energy of Christ, already held for some time by the Monophysites and Nestorians, "seemed perfectly acceptable from the point of view of Chalcedonian and Neo-Chalcedonian Orthodoxy" as well, and consequently was "obliged to become the basis for the desired union."[8] The first union on the basis of this formula was effected in the year 633 by Sergius' friend Cyrus, the Patriarch of Alexandria. "The basis of this union was the doctrine of the unique energy," but, significantly, the union effected did not raise the underlying and more fundamental question of the will.[9] The success of this venture prompted Sergius to issue his *Psephos* later that same year.

But with the *Psephos* a significant change occurs, for the root question of the will is mentioned for the first time. Whereas

6. Léthel, *Théologie de L'Agonie du Christ: La Liberté humaine du Fils de ieu et son importance sotériologique mises en lumière par Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, p. 23.

7. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

8. Ibid., p. 25.

9. Ibid.

Cyrus' union had been successfully effected on the basis of the formula "one energy", the *Psephos* insisted that the Alexandrian Patriarch allow no one to speak of either one or two energies, as this indicated, to Sergius at least, two contradictory wills. It is the *Psephos* which, therefore, must be considered, according to Léthel, "as the true act of the birth of 'Byzantine Monotheletism' "[10] and indeed must be regarded as its "founding charter,"[11] for while it does not explicitly raise the issue of Monotheletism, it nevertheless treats the question of Christ's wills in a way that includes all the logical dynamics of the Monotheletism of the *Ekthesis*.

> By this expression 'Byzantine Monotheletism', we designate a theological doctrine perfectly coherent, to be carefully distinguished from Monophysite Monotheletism on the one hand, and from the vulgar Monotheletism of propaganda on the other. In effect, there is not a single 'Monotheletism' but 'Monotheletisms', that is to say, several doctrines not only profoundly different but also joined at one sole point: the affirmation of only one will of Christ. For in the Monotheletism that Sergius envisaged it was not proper to speak of a doctrinal compromise, but rather of a purely verbal accord in a formula whose sole principal advantage was its astonishing ambiguity.[12]

As St. Maximus himself was to note, the formula was solely a political expedient, being capable of Nestorian, Monophysite, and even Eutychian, interpretations.[13]

But in spite of the intensely political character of the formula, there were also theological factors altogether apart from Monophysitism and Nestorianism which impelled Sergius and the Byzantine Church in this direction, and those factors are to be sought within the dynamics of Cyrillic Chalcedonianism itself. As Fr. John Meyendorff notes in his study *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*:

> Byzantine Christology as defined in Justinian's time is criticized, however, for 'leaving too much in the dark the reality of the psychological life of the Saviour's soul' and for 'modifying the properties of human nature as such.' And since it is obvious that all the subsequent destiny of Eastern Christianity is implicated in this

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10. Ibid., p. 26.

11. Ibid., p. 19.

12. Ibid., p. 26.

13. The Confessor's entire *Second Opuscule* is taken up with a discussion of these implications. cf. *TheoPol 2*, PG 91:40A-45C.

> judgment, the question is of some importance. In order to solve it one must remember that the decisions of the fifth council do not constitute a final conclusion but only a stage in the development of Christology. The dogmatic content must be considered in the light of latter stages, and especially of St. Maximus' doctrine of the two wills and his conception of deification.[14]

Thus, while it is certainly true that Byzantine Monotheletism is to a large degree an expedient of imperial policy, it is nonetheless true that it is not at all devoid of theological and anthropological significance. Indeed, it comes

> closer than any other of the ancient Christological disputes to raising the question of the human personality of Jesus, in the modern psychological sense, and the decision of 680 was based on the important principle that union with the divine did not deprive Jesus of any element of true humanity, but perfected it.[15]

To a certain extent, then, the whole controversy between the Byzantine Monotheletes and Dyotheletes must be interpreted as a conflict between two significant and quite opposed parties within Cyrillic Chalcedonianism itself. It was, in effect, a controversy which would determine the subsequent direction and emphases of that school, for whereas "Maximus proved in writings and disputations that Dyotheletism is a necessary inference from the two natures of the Chalcedonian creed," the Monotheletes simply reversed the process, inferring the one will from the one hypostasis.[16]

Monotheletism thus seems to be quite in keeping with the basic tenets of Neo-Chalcedonianism.[17]

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14. John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, pp. 85-86. The citations within the quotation are from C. Moeller's article "Le Chalcédonisme et le Neo-Chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VIe siècle," in Grillmeier-Bacht, *as Konzil von Chalkedon*, I (Wurzburg, 1951), pp. 637-720.

15. "Monotheletes," *Westminster Dictionary*, p. 568.

16. Reinhold Seeberg, *The History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 280-281. See also Brock, "An Early Syriac Life," p. 344: "...the great majority of Chalcedonians in Syria and Palestine had previously been, not just passively monothelete but actively opposed to the dyothelete theology... this hostile attitude appears to have been characteristic of the entire, or almost the entire, Chalcedonian community in Syria-Palestine until the third decade of the eighth century."

17. Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of St. Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 40-41.

> In its determination to maintain the Cappadocian concept of the hypostasis Neo-Chalcedonianism among other things came to define hypostasis as *notae individuantes*. This had the consequence that the concrete characteristics of human nature *threatened to be swallowed up in, or mixed with, the divine hypostasis* (of Christ).[18]

Consequently, Monotheletism intensifies the tension between nature and hypostasis, for, taking its start "from the position already affirmed at Ephesus in 431" that all statements of the Gospels should be referred to the one incarnate hypostasis of the Word, Byzantine Monotheletism concluded, quite logically enough, that the will was rooted in the hypostasis.[19] Thus when the question arose, as it inevitably had to, whether the single energy in Christ was divine or human, the answer was that it was neither, since the expression referred to the mode of the union, that is, to the hypostasis.[20] But the apparently orthodox credentials of Monotheletism are even more deeply and explicitly rooted within the patristic tradition; it goes beyond simply sharing certain dynamics of Neo-Chalcedonianism, as an examination of its two principal dogmatic expositions, the *Psephos* and the *Ekthesis*, will demonstrate. It is by examining these two documents, and the subsequent and consummate distillation of their principles by Patriarch Pyrrhus in his disputation with St. Maximus (*Disputation with Pyrrhus*) that one may discern three distinct and logically related concerns.

III. The Three Principles of Monotheletism

A. The Dialectics of Opposition: The Principle of Non-Contradiction at Gethsemane

The union which Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria had effected with the Monophysites not only condemned Nestorianism "in the sharpest possible manner"[21] and brought back the expressions

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18. Ibid., p. 49.

19. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (600-1700), p. 70.

20. Ibid., p. 67.

21. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol V., p. 20; 8th anathema, Mansi XI:563.

"from two natures, one natural union" and "one nature of God the Word Incarnate", but it also laid the basis, in its seventh anathema, for the *Psephos* which was to follow later that year. This anathema condemned anyone who did not confess "that this one and the same Christ and Son worked both the divine and the human by one divine-human operation, as St. Dionysius teaches."[22] St. Sophronius, at that time in Alexandria, prostrated himself before Cyrus[23] and begged the patriarch not to go through with the union. This moment, Schönborn observes, marked "the beginning of the struggle against a new heresy, the first breach in the ingenious politico-religious construction of Constantinople."[24] Sophronius subsequently traveled to Constantinople where he sought to win support for his own nascent dyothelete position as well as to win Sergius over to the dyothelete cause.[25] It would seem that Sophronius carried with him letters of introduction from Cyrus, whose intention was not to refer Sophronius to a less than impartial umpire, but rather to the origin and zealous supporter of Monotheletism in the person of the great patriarch of Constantinople. While St. Sophronius failed in his object of winning Sergius over to the dyothelete position, he nevertheless did succeed to the point that "Sergius would no longer allow" the formula of one energy to be promulgated, and "in this direction he gave counsel and instruction to Cyrus... that, after the union had been established, he should no longer give permission to speak either of one or of two energies."[26] Immediately upon the elevation of Sophronius to the patriarchate of Jerusalem, Sergius wrote, in a letter to Pope Honorius, that

> the expression 'one energy' should not be employed, since, although it was used by some of the Fathers, it seemed strange to many, and offended their ears, since they entertained the suspicion that it was used in to order to do away with the two natures of Christ, a thing to be avoided. In like manner, to speak of two energies gives offense with many, because this expression occurs in none of the holy Fathers, and *because there would follow from thence the doctrine of two contradictory wills in Christ - a false inference! - as though the*

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22. 7th anathema, Mansi XI:563; English text as above. St. (Pseudo-) Dionysius, *Ep. 4*, PG 3:1073.

23. *DispPyr*, PG 91:332B-333D.

24. Cristoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem*, p. 79.

25. Hefele, *History*, p. 22.

26. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

> *Logos had been willing to endure the suffering which brings us salvation, but the manhood had opposed it.*[27]

The ground is thus laid for the *Psephos*, for we find here Sergius' first mention of the principle of non-contradiction in the form of an opposition in the wills of Christ in the Passion. It is this principle of non-contradiction, as applied to the Passion, which is the basis on which the *Psephos* argues for Monotheletism.

Like the letter to Pope Honorius, the *Psephos* concluded that the expression "two energies" had

> scandalized a great number because it has never been employed by any of the saints and approved teachers of the mysteries of the Church.[28]

And, like the letter to Honorius, it went on to affirm that this expression

> has as one of its consequences that one must confess two wills which allow an opposition of one to the other, as if one part of God the Word had willed to accomplish the salvific Passion and that the other part, the humanity which is in Him, resisted His will, being opposed to it.[29]

This, as Léthel notes in his outline and commentary on the *Psephos*, Sergius subsequently reduces to the principle of non-contradiction:[30]

> Thus, one introduces two beings who will contrary objects of will, which is impious, for it is impossible that two wills should subsist in one sole and same subject and by relation to the same object. Therefore, here is the clear teaching of the salvific dogma of the God-fearing fathers: at no moment does His flesh, which is animated by a rational soul, accomplish its natural movement separately nor by its own impulse in opposition to the commandment of God the Word Who united it to Himself by hypostasis. This natural movement is accomplished when God the Word wills.[31]

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27. Mansi XI:533D, English translation of Hefele, pp. 25-26.
28. Mansi XI:533E.
29. Ibid.
30. Léthel, *L'Agonie*.
31. Mansi XI:533E-536A, p. 32.

St. Sophronius responded the next year with a council held at Jerusalem which issued a *Synodikon* in which the following propositions were put forward:

> He gave and granted to the human nature, when He would, time to work (ἐνεργεῖν) and to suffer, which is proper to it, that His Incarnation should not be regarded as mere appearance. Not unwillingly or by constraint did He undertake this, although He let it come to Him physically and humanly, and worked and acted in human movements... He suffered and acted and worked humanly, when He Himself willed, and when He regarded it as proper for the onlookers; and not when the natural and carnal movements willed to be naturally moved to operation.[32]

Sergius responded to this position with the other seminal document of Byzantine Monotheletism, the *Ekthesis*, in the year 638.

> Because the expression one energy, although some of the Fathers use it, yet sounds strange to the ears of some, and disquiets them... and since in the same way many take offense at the expression, two energies, since it is not used by any of the holy Fathers (on account of the fact that) we should then be obliged as a consequence to teach *two mutually contradictory wills, as if God the Logos, aiming at our salvation, was willing to endure suffering, but His manhood had opposed itself to this His will*, which is impious and foreign to the Christian dogma - when even the wicked Nestorius, although he, dividing the Incarnation and introducing two Sons, did not venture to maintain two wills of the same, but, on the contrary, taught the similar willing of the two persons assumed by him; how can, then, the orthodox, who worship only one Son and Lord, admit in Him two, and those *mutually opposed* wills?[33]

The significant difference, therefore, between the *Psephos* and the *Ekthesis* lay in nothing theological, but rather in the fact that the second document was promulgated by the personal signature of the Emperor Heraclius. The doctrine of Monotheletism, in other words, was now imperial policy. But to make matters even more official, Sergius' successor[34] to the throne of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, moved swiftly to bestow upon the *Ekthesis* an aura of ecclesiastical sanction by summoning a council in Constantinople the following year which stipulated that even bishops who had not been present at the council were required to accept it.[35]

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32. Mansi XI:461.
33. Mansi X:996A-C.
34. Sergius had died in December 638.

The principle of non-contradiction thus played a pivotal role in the doctrine of Monotheletism, but its roots lie much deeper, in the Arian controversies after the Council of Nicea (325 A. D.). In these controversies one of the key texts was St. John 6:38 "The Son is descended from heaven not to do His own will, but the will of the Father." Accepting the principle that a difference in will must correspond to a difference in nature, and thus tacitly accepting the principle of a *natural*, as distinguished from an *hypostatic*, will, the Arians argued that since, as John 6:38 clearly indicated, the Son had a different will than the Father, He must therefore clearly be of a different nature than the Father. Not being consubstantial with the Father, He is not God. In a lengthy text from his *Fourth Theological Oration*, St. Gregory of Nazianzus refers to this position:

> Let them quote in the seventh place that the Son came down from Heaven, not to do His own Will, but the Will of Him that sent Him. Well, if this had not been said by Himself Who came down, we should say that the phrase was modeled as issuing from the Human Nature, for His Human Will *cannot be opposed to God, seeing it is wholly deified*; but conceived simply as our nature, in as much as the human will does not completely follow the Divine, but for the most part *struggles against and resists it.* For we understand in the same way the words 'Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, let not what I will but thy Will prevail.' For it is not likely that He did not know whether it was possible or not, or that *He would oppose will to will.* But since, as this is the language of Him Who assumed our nature (for He it was Who came down), and not of the same nature which He assumed, we must meet the objection in this way, that the passage does not mean that the Son has a special will of His own, besides that of the Father, but that He has not.[36]

This text was highly problematical, given the later perspective of the monothelete controversy, for both sides accept the principle of non-contradiction, but use it in different ways. For the Arians, the contradictory will of Christ indicated His creaturehood and *only* His creaturehood. The Arians thus use the principle to exclude a divine will in Christ. For St. Gregory, however, the principle, while accepted, indicates not only *two* wills but two *opposing* wills. St. Gregory, in other words, cannot separate the principle of non-

35. Hefele, *History*, p. 65.

36. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fourth Theological Oration (Oration 30)*, PG 36: 108C-109B, pp. 313-314 NPNF.

contradiction of wills in Christ from that of plurality of wills in Christ; both principles are, for him, the same and indeed, *one* principle. It being impossible for there to be two *opposing* wills in Christ, St. Gregory therefore must conclude that there are not *two* wills of Christ. Both parties to this dispute are thus "equally incapable of envisaging two wills of Christ."[37] Thus, for the Arians, the affirmation of another will other than the Father's will

> necessarily entailed the denial of an identical will, and conversely, for Gregory the affirmation of an identical will entailed, in a fashion no less necessary, the denial of another will. The will of Christ was therefore considered exclusively from the point of view of the Trinitarian problem which dominated the whole Arian controversy.[38]

Each side, being incapable of affirming two wills in Christ, came to diametrically opposite conclusions even though they shared the same starting principle.

However, one must not press resemblances between St. Gregory of Nazianzus and the Arian party too far, even though they are agreed on a very important principle. For the Arians, the will of the Son which is other than the will of the Father is not a human will but the will of the preexistent, and created, Word. But for St. Gregory, this "other will" of the Son is formulated in terms of its being the *human* will. And this fact is not without its own significance, for it means that

> In the hypothesis of only one will of Christ, an hypothesis common in both Gregory and his adversaries, *the affirmation of a human will necessarily entails the denial of a divine will in Christ.*[39]

Why is this so significant? For two reasons. First, it is significant because it raises the question of predestination and free will in a specifically christological and trinitarian context: if Christ has no human will then He certainly cannot freely choose, but must be moved about in his humanity by the Word. The structural dynamics of this whole dilemma compel certain comparisons; it is almost as if one were reading a patristic version of Luther, for whom the slightest affirmation of a human will, of human free

37. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 31.

38. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

39. Ibid., p. 32, emphasis mine.

choice, was precisely the denial of the omniscience and omnipotence of the divine will.[40]

But it is significant for a second reason. It is significant for the crucial role which the principle of non-contradiction played in leading Gregory to his conclusion. For St. Gregory

> the concept of a distinction of wills automatically implied that of opposition.... Another will is a contrary will, and *vice-versa*. The hypothesis of a will of Christ other than that of the Father is thus at the same time the hypothesis of a will of Christ opposed to the will of the Father.... Because he has not yet *distinguished the moral problem of contradiction from the physical problem of distinction, Gregory is not able to conceive of a will simultaneously distinct and yet not opposed.*[41]

It is this confusion of the principle of non-contradiction with that of distinction that is the true basis of Byzantine Monotheletism.[42]

Yet one must search still further for the roots of the principle of opposition and its exclusion in Christ. This leads inevitably to Apollinarius, and ultimately to Aristotle. In the middle of the late fourth century the former "had already denied the duality of wills in Christ for moral, physical and metaphysical reasons,"[43] for he asserted that "it is impossible in one sole and same subject, for two beings to coexist which will contrary things."[44] Aristotle had much earlier formulated this as the simple metaphysical principle of non-contradiction:

> It is impossible for anyone to believe the same thing to be and not to be... and if it is impossible that contrary attributes should belong at the same time to the same subject... obviously it is impossible for

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40. cf. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* 754: "Through us God preaches, gives alms to the poor, comforts the sorrowful. What then is left for the free will? Nothing." cf. also Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. I, *The Freedom of the Will* (ed. Paul Ramsey, New Haven: Yale University Press, no date), p. 9: "Either contingency and the liberty of self-determination must be run out of this world, *or* God will be shut out." Emphasis mine. This last position is notably similar to the position of the Stoics with regard to the possibility of a creation *ex nihilo* and to their position on the will in general. For them, free choice in any but the most limited interior, psychological sense of an assent to Fate, meant that the world was not ordered by Reason.

41. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, pp. 33 (my emphasis).

42. Ibid., p. 35.

43. Ibid., p. 42.

44. Apollinarius, *Fragment 150*, ed. Leitzmann. cf. Léthel, *L'Agonie*. p. 42.

> the same man at the same time to believe the same thing to be and not to be.[45]

In the *Psephos* and the *Ekthesis*, then, the confusion of the principles of non-contradiction and distinction are hardened and crystallized, but applied in an entirely new context, that of the Passion of Christ.

While Sergius "is certainly inspired by the text of Gregory of Nazianzus," he has adapted its principles from the trinitarian context into an exclusively christological context, which is the context of Apollinarius.[46] But in the process of his transposition, the focus of attention also moves from considerations of the text of St. John 6:38 to a consideration of the Passion. That is to say, the context for Sergius is not broadly Incarnational, but even more specific than this. As Le Guillou observes, what "is at the centre of the monothelete controversy is not so much a discussion of the two natures of Christ and their respective properties, but rather an interpretation of a major event in the life of Christ, the Passion."[47] And his account of the Passion of Christ in the light of the Aristotelean principle of non-contradiction is no less than masterful. The two contradictory and opposing wills are envisaged at the *same time*, the hour of the Passion, as well as being envisaged in the *same subject*, that is to say, the Cup, the symbol of the Passion.[48] And so Aristotle: "It is impossible that contrary attributes should belong at the *same time* to the *same subject*." Thus,

> when the scene of Gethsemane has been described, this mention of the contradiction becomes useless and superfluous, since by definition two wills considered at the same time and by relation to one and the same object are not able to be contradictory. If then, they are not contradictory, they cannot be distinguished, rather, one speaks of one sole will. Thus, the confusion is not only between distinction and contradiction, but again between the will as willing and the will as what is willed.[49]

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45. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book Gamma: 3:1005b20, p. 737.

46. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, pp. 38-39.

47. Ibid., p. 5, from the Preface by M.-J. le Guillou.

48. Ibid., p. 43.

49. Ibid.

In a manner quite similar to Plotinus and Origen, then, Sergius effects a confusion of the categories of opposition and distinction.

The transposition of the confusion of the two principles, opposition and distinction, from the trinitarian context in St. Gregory to the christological context in Sergius displays the different uses to which this confusion is put. For Gregory, a human will of Christ would deny the common unity, the common *nature*, of the Father and the Son. But in the context of Sergius, the context of the Passion, a human will of Christ led to a rather different outcome; it was a denial of the unity of the divine and human, of the *hypostasis* of Christ.[50] Consequently, while Sergius does indeed identify the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of distinction, he does so within an entirely different structure and to a completely different purpose.[51]

But the impetus to affirm some sort of human will in Christ was too strong to deny, and consequently, shortly after the death of Sergius in December 638, an important variation of Byzantine Monotheletism appeared in Constantinople, promoted by Sergius' successor Pyrrhus between December 638 and September 641, which viewed Christ as having a human will, but only by appropriation.[52] For this school of thought, Christ's refusal of the Passion stemmed from a "true human will opposed to the divine will." But the final interpretation of this distinction *cum* opposition is different. The refusal truly belongs to a real human will, contrary to that of God, but this will is that which is really in us and not in Christ. "The final interpretation of Sergius is therefore inverted: for Sergius, this refusal was in Christ, but it was not a true human will. In this new perspective the refusal is a true human will, but it is not in Christ."[53] This is, however, but an additional dialectical nuance, for the dialectical basis for both Sergius' and the later version of Byzantine Monotheletism are the same: the human will must always stand in some sort of opposition to the divine will.[54] I think of no better words with which to close this section than Pyrrhus' concise formula: "It is impossible for

50. Ibid.
51. cf. Pierre Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur*, p. 244.
52. cf. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, pp. 50-54, especially p. 51.
53. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 50.
54. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

two wills to coexist with each other in one person without opposition."[55]

B. The Principles that
1) The Will is Hypostatic, and
2) What is Natural is Compelled

For this section we shall rely upon two very succinct statements of the monothelete Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, in *The Disputation with Pyrrhus*, for our analysis, rather than upon the texts of the *Psephos* and *Ekthesis*. In so doing, we hope to highlight a principle overlooked by the otherwise seminal commentaries of Piret and Léthel. Pyrrhus, in his unsuccessful disputation with St. Maximus the Confessor, distilled two more principles of Monotheletism in addition to that of non-contradiction. One of these principles, that the Will is Hypostatic, has been known since the days of the great nineteenth century histories of dogma[56] but has not been connected to the previously neglected third principle. The third principle is that What is Natural is Compelled.

The principle that the Will is Hypostatic is clear enough, and Pyrrhus' own words cannot be improved upon for its verbal embodiment: "If Christ is one person, then He willed as one person. And if He willed as one person, then doubtless He has one will, and not two."[57] Of course all commentators from Seeberg[58] to Piret[59] and Léthel[60] have realized that this conception is related to the principle of non-contradiction, that it is, in fact, a logical deduction from it. The principle of non-contradiction was meant to safeguard the unity of the hypostasis of Christ and conversely, the unity of the hypostasis of Christ was meant to guard against any introduction of opposing wills. The one logically implied the other for the Monotheletes.

55. *DispPyr*, PG 91:292A.
56. cf. Seeberg, *History*, pp. 280-281 for a succinct statement of this position.
57. *DispPyr*, PG 91:293B.
58. Seeberg, *History*, pp. 280-281.
59. Piret, *Le Christ*, p. 318.
60. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 41.

But there is in fact a third principle, that What is Natural is Compelled, to which the second principle, that The Will is Hypostatic, relates. And these two principles are related precisely in a dialectical opposition. Responding to St. Maximus' assertion that the will is natural, and that there are thus two natural wills in Christ, Pyrrhus argues that "if you say that the will is natural, and *if what is natural is compelled,* and if you say that the wills in Christ are natural, how can you avoid being obliged to *take away all His voluntary motion*?"[61] Pyrrhus quite clearly thought that a natural will was a denial of "voluntary motion;" that is, of free will or of free choice. In this he is being faithful to two conceptions which can claim much support in the patristic tradition, the first of these being that motion and choice are interrelated, and the second being that it is the hypostasis, as that which transcends the limitations of nature, which is the root of freedom. But significantly, Pyrrhus formulates the latter conception not only in terms of a dialectical opposition between freedom and hypostasis on the one hand and nature and compulsion on the other, but also in a manner that recalls the dynamics of the Origenist Problematic. Indeed, at the risk of anticipating our remarks in chapter seven, it is worth noting that St. Maximus perceives Pyrrhus' remarks, not as a specifically *Monothelete problem,* but as a problem of theology as well.

> If one were to continue in this line of reasoning then God, Who is by nature God, by nature Good, and by nature Creator, must of necessity be not only God and Good but also Creator. To think, much less to speak, in this manner is extreme blasphemy. For who dares to attribute necessity to God? Consider my friend, if you will, the blasphemy of such a proposition.[62]

One could indeed take St. Maximus' remarks as an epitome of the Origenist Problematic. What makes them noteworthy, however, is that they occur within a context otherwise christological. But this should not be surprising, for in a manner quite similar to Neoplatonism and Origenism, the Monotheletism espoused by Pyrrhus interconnects the dialectic of oppositions and the idea that natural things are compelled things; the Will therefore *had* to be hypostatic, because what is natural is compelled. But, as St. Maximus points out, this has quite dubious implications for the

61. *DispPyr*, PG 91:293B.

62. Ibid., PG 91:293C.

divine freedom of choice, the very thing which Pyrrhus, in the case of Christ, desired to uphold.

We are now able to see why Neoplatonism, the Origenist Problematic, and Byzantine Monotheletism form a logical continuum of dilemmas. Indeed, to be completely accurate, one would have to say that they are various metaphysical, psychological and eschatological aspects of the same dilemma, for in each case - Plotinus, Origen, the Arians, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Monotheletes - there occurs the identification of "the notion of contradiction, or opposition, with that of distinction."[63] None of the positions previously surveyed seemed to be able to conceive of real distinctions in the Good, distinctions that do not involve moral oppositions and therefore some degree of evil. One might not be going too far to say that what ultimately unites these various positions subsequently defined by the Church as heretical is precisely a particularly Neoplatonic and "definitional" model of the simplicity of the divine essence.

There are two corollaries which follow from this confusion of the principles of non-contradiction and distinction. The first is that of the passivity of the human nature before the divine:

> For if, as both sides had to acknowledge, 'the agent was one,' namely, the hypostasis, it seemed to follow necessarily that 'the action was single.' The case for this seems to have been made first by Theodore of Pharan... (who) taught that whatever had been done by the incarnate Logos had been done by him as Creator and God, *with the humanity serving as the organ of his divinity*, and that therefore all the things that are said of Him either as God or in a human way are the action of the divinity of the Logos.... The humanity of Christ was the 'organ,' or, in a more technical term, 'that which is moved by God' (θεοκινητος), as in the formula of Sergius: 'in the Lord Christ, his entire humanity was... in all things... directed and moved by God'.[64]

This meant that for Monotheletism, humanity could not be effectively viewed, particularly in reference to Christ's sinlessness and impeccability, "other than as a passive determination of the human nature by the divine nature."[65] And in this,

63. Piret, *Le Christ*, p. 249.

64. Pelikan, *Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, p. 66.

65. Schönborn, *Sophrone*, p. 192.

Monotheletism shares the determinism of Neoplatonism and Origenism.

The second corollary discloses the eschatological dimensions of the dispute, a dimension exposed by Pyrrhus. There are patristic traditions behind the affirmation that there would be one will of God and the saints in the eschaton. "But," Pyrrhus says, "if the willing belongs to the nature and if the more distinguished of the fathers say that there is one will of God and His saints, then there will be one nature of God and the saints."[66] This problem is addressed by St. Maximus at great length in the *First Opuscule* of the *Theological and Polemical Works*.[67] It was thus evidently seen by both parties in the Monothelete Controversy as a crucial aspect of the dispute. And it was so precisely because it could be logically construed as supporting the distinctly Origenistic doctrine of the apokatastasis: if there was one will of Christ which moved the human nature even in spite of that nature's own innate opposition to God, and if in the eschaton there was to be one will of God and the saints, whose wills were in any case passive before the divine will, then what could logically prevent one from asserting that the Origenistic understanding of the apokatastasis was a logical implication of the one hypostatic will? And yet, could not the same also be said of St. Maximus' proposition? If the will is natural, and the human will of Christ effects our salvation by an immutable fixity in the good, then once again, what could logically prevent one from asserting the apokatastasis, and consequently, a denial of human free choice as well? It would appear, in other words, that in both the monothelete and the dyothelete positions, human free choice fares rather badly.

These, then, were the christological and eschatological consequences of the problem posed to St. Maximus.

66. *DispPyr*, PG 91:292B.

67. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:21D.

Chapter 4

Conclusions to Part One

If, then, God should principally will something other than Himself, it will follow that something other is the cause of His willing. But His willing is His being....[1]

From this it further appears that the principal object of the divine will is the divine essence.[2]

Moreover, since every agent acts so far as it is in act, God, Who is pure act, must act through His essence. Willing, however, is a certain operation of God. Therefore God must be endowed with will through His essence. Therefore His will is His essence.... From this it appears that God's will is not other than His essence.[3]

Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles

In this section, I propose to summarize the results of the first part of the essay - focusing principally on chapters two and three - in the form of propositions so as to make quite explicit the logical interrelationships and dynamics of the structures which have just been surveyed. As an aid to this summarization, the notes at the end of the chapter gather all references cited previously in relationship to a particular proposition.

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book One: *God*, I:74:4 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 244-245.

2. Ibid., I:64:1, p. 244.

3. Ibid., I:73:4 and I, pp. 243, 242.

I. If the Divine Essence is Defined[4] as Simplicity, then the Following Consequences Ensue:

A. There is an ontological identity and mutual logical equivalence of the categories of Essence, Will, and Activity (or Energy).[5]

B. Hence, these categories become *merely* categories, that is, they become conventions of human language, and do not correspond to distinct metaphysical realities. They are each names, and only names, for the same "Something."

C. In this case, the definition of simplicity functions as a great metaphysical "equals" (=) sign.[6]

D. From this it follows that any given nature or given attribute of a nature, or "what is natural", is compelled.[7]

1. *In Plotinian Neoplatonism* this meant that the One had no choice whether to produce the beings which emanated from It or not; as It was good It *had* to

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4. For St. Maximus, the term simplicity does not function as a definition of the divine essence, but as a means or method whereby to assure that the divine essence is wholly within each Person, and each Person wholly and without partition God (cf. Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur*, pp. 67-68). In Plotinus, it is strictly a definition, and not a symbol, and the logical equivalence of the categories of nature, will, and activity is the result. These two points are significant, for it would appear that there are two directions within the history of dogma whereby the doctrine of God can be compromised by a definitional understanding of the simplicity: one in the direction of a confusion of the Person with the essence, and a second, more subtle, confusion of the essence with the attributes.

5. Plotinus, *Enneads* (all page references to the *Loeb Classical Library* edition): I:6:6, p. 51; III:8:8, p. 385; V:1:8, p. 41; V:5:6, p. 172; Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, p. 53; J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, pp. 67, 75, 77, 79; Origen, *On First Principles* (all page references are to the English translation of the Koetschau text), I:1:5-6, p. 10; I:1:6, pp. 10, 11. Logically, the monothelete proposition that what is natural is compelled is related to this.

6. It is interesting to note the manner in which St. Augustine treats the attributes of God in *On the Trinity*, where, because they are not only identical to the essence but to each other, several interesting results obtain. cf. *On the Trinity* 7:1:2, 8:1:2, 7:6:11, 7:3:5, 15:27:47-48.

overflow the bounds of Its goodness and produce creatures, which were, due to the definition of simplicity, not really distinct from the One, since the One's Being, Activity, and Will were "wholly indistinguishable."[8]

2. *In Origenism* a similar compulsion occurs in two quite explicit manners, one on the theological, the other on the eschatological, level. God's being the Father was wholly indistinguishable from His being the Creator; therefore, as He always begat the Son, so He always willed the Creation. On the eschatological level, the level of human free choice, the Origenist doctrine of the apokatastasis excludes any notion of continued creaturely free choice, unless of course there is the possibility of recurrent and successive falls,[9] which means, in turn, that free choice is defined dialectically, as the opposition between good and evil are the only objects of its choice.

3. *In Monotheletism* the dialectic of oppositions is one of the means used to support the doctrine of the one will of the hypostasis of Christ. As a result, the will is hypostatic, and in opposition to this, nature is compelled.

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7. *Enneads*, I:6:6, p. 251-V:3:7, p. 95; Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 67, 75, 77, 79, 80; Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, p. 63; cf. also O'Brien, *The Essential Plotinus*, p. 22; Armstrong, Introduction to the Enneads in The Loeb Classical Library, p.xix; Origen, *On First Principles*, I:2:10, pp. 23-24; I:4:3, p. 42; IV:4:1, p. 315; George Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History*, Vol IV in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, pp. 42, 46, 47; *Creation and Redemption*, Vol III in *The Collected Works*, pp. 55-56; *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, PG 91:289A.

8. Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 77; cf. *Enneads* I:6:6, p. 251.

9. Origen, *On First Principles*, II:3:3, p. 87; III:1:23, p. 209.

II. If the Dialectic of Oppositions is the Means Whereby the Divine Essence is Defined as Simplicity; the Following Consequences Ensue:

A. Beings as *multiplicity* are opposed to the *One* and its *simplicity*,[10] and

B. Beings as *Evil* are opposed to the *Good*,[11] thus:

C. Multiplicity and composition are *Evil* as Simplicity and unity are *Good*.[12] The Good, paradoxically, is always a static, solitary, circumscribable and unitary principle.

D. But any true free choice must imply *motion*[13] and entails *multiplicity in the objects of its choice*.[14]

E. But since multiplicity is evil, free choice is evil (we have seen that neither Origen's God nor Plotinus' One chose to create, since that would have implied multiplicity and, moreover, hesitation within them between opposite courses of action). Thus,

F. There is no distinction between the Principle of Distinction, of Multiplicity, and the Principle of Opposition.[15] The equation "opposition = distinction" remains a common formula to neoplatonic, origenist, and monothelete thought.

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10. *Enneads*, V:1:5, p. 27; V:1:12, p. 113; III:8:10, p. 385; Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 30; Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 32, 80; Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, p. 91; Origen, *On First Principles*, I:8:1, p. 67; I:8:2, p. 69, II:1:1, pp. 76-77; II:9:2, p. 130.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, PG 91:292A; Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* I:9, p. 196 (in *St. Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans. S. N. Deane, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1981), p. 196; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, pp. 25-26, 46, 63; Mansi XI 533C; Léthel, *L'Agonie du Christ*, pp. 31-33, 37ff.; St. Gregory of Nazianzus; Oration 30 (*Fourth Theological Oration*) PG 36:108C-109B; Apollinarius, Fragment 150, edition Leitzmann, cited Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 42; Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book Gamma 3:1005b20, p. 737; Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité*, p. 244.

But once this fact is borne in mind, significant structural differences do appear between Plotinian Neoplatonism, Origenism, and Monotheletism.

1. *In Plotinian Neoplatonism* beings are, logically, evil both because they move and because they are multiple.

2. *In Origenism* this position is somewhat mitigated, for beings in the primordial Henad could be construed as evil because multiple, but good because they are fixed, before the fall, in contemplation of God. Beings might also be construed as good because they are so fixed but as evil because they subsequently move.

3. *In Monotheletism* a confusion of opposition and distinction is found, such that confession of two wills of Christ necessarily implies the notion that Christ's human will opposes God, and is therefore evil.

Notwithstanding these facts, the confusion of opposition and distinction is a formula that unites these apparently disparate philosophical and theological systems.

III. The Phrases "Around the One" and "Around God"

A. The phrase "Around the One" or "Around God" denotes a distinction between the Good and its effects, or emanations, as well as denoting a quality of motion of beings situated in this category.

B. *In Origen* the phrase denotes a distinction between Good and His creatures, who are more or less *statically* fixed in the Good.

C. *In Plotinus*, however, the phrase serves not only to distinguish a category of emanations from the One, but also the *infinite transcendence of the One* over that very category. Those situated in this category can therefore never attain to the One, as it is infinitely removed from them. Never being able to attain to the One, creatures must therefore always *move* towards the One. But because they can never attain the One, this motion becomes a motion *around* the One.

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The foregoing chapters, while lengthy, are nevertheless absolutely essential for the proper understanding of the logical interrelatedness of the tasks which confronted St. Maximus the Confessor in his polemical exposition of a doctrine of human free choice in the eschaton. First, in order to avoid the two pitfalls of Origenism and their implications for the doctrine of free choice, the Confessor would have to articulate a doctrine of free choice that, like the origenist apokatastasis, allowed for free choices by the saints in eternity and yet, *unlike* the apokatastasis, did not allow the possibility of a subsequent fall. That is to say, he would have to articulate a *non-dialectical definition of free choice.* Second, if, as Le Guillou observes, "monotheletism had profoundly posed the problem of this human liberty in the form of a 'state of the question' " it was able to do so

> in a manner that at that time was radically new. It was in considering the same event of Christ's life that Maximus was obliged to resolve this problem by placing in full view not only the reality of Christ's human liberty but again its capital role in our salvation.[16]

In effect, St. Maximus would have to find the means whereby to divorce the two principles, opposition and distinction, that had become so intimately wedded in the monothelete doctrine. This work would involve two aspects: affirming that the two wills in Christ are not opposing wills, and affirming that what is natural is not compelled. In contradistinction to Monotheletism, the Confessor would have to do an "anthropology from above"; he would have to presuppose that the human will need not necessarily be opposed to the divine. And finally, in order to have a doctrine of real free choice in Heaven, and not have recourse to the neoplatonic distinction between free choice and freedom, the Confessor would have to maintain that there are multiple objects from which the human will can choose and specify exactly what these objects are. It is to the consideration of the Confessor's doctrine of free choice that we now turn.

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16. M. J. Le Guillou, from the Introduction to Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 6.

PART TWO

God never ceases from goods, because He never began them.

St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 90:1096D

Remember, O Lord, the souls of Thy departed servants. Forgive all their sins, both voluntary and involuntary. Grant them participation in Thine eternal good things and the enjoyment of the blessed and eternal life.

Orthodox Petition for the Departed

Chapter 5

The Psychology of Willing in the Eschaton and in Christ

The will is infinite, and the execution confin'd...
the desire is boundless, and the act a slave to limit.

William Shakespeare,
Troilus and Cressida, Act III, Scene II

I. Introduction

In this chapter we shall seek to explicate the answers that St. Maximus gives to the following question: "What specific psychological conditions must be present for there to be an eschatological free choice on the part of the saints, yet without there being any possibility of their being able to sin?" This is a rather transcendental question, philosophically speaking, and requires for its answer a slow, inductive, and dialectical approach to the Confessor's writings, an approach well in keeping with his own methods when dealing with Monotheletism and its eschatological implications. After outlining the structure and salient points of the First Opuscule of the *Theological and Polemical Works (Opuscula Theologica et Polemica)*, we shall examine the actual texts bearing on the eschatological and christological aspects of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice. In this examination, particular attention will be given to the centrality of the particular psychological processes in the eschaton, and to the discovery of what conditions are necessary for this cessation to take place. Finally, the christological aspects of the Confessor's doctrine are considered in the light of his eschatological perspective. The conclusions drawn at the end of the chapter lead to further questions which will form the subject matter of the next two chapters.

The First Opuscule is divided into fourteen sections, consisting first of an epistolary introduction and salutation, which is then followed by eleven titled chapters, and ended by an

epistolary conclusion. The titles of the eleven titled chapters are as follows:

1. Concerning the Natural Will, that is, The Faculty of Will[1]
2. Concerning Wishing[2]
3. Concerning Counsel, that is, Deliberation[3]
4. Concerning Free Choice[4]
5. Concerning the Things Upon Which We Deliberate[5]
6. Concerning Gnomie[6]
7. Concerning Power of Choice[7]
8. Concerning Opinion[8]
9. Concerning Understanding, in other words, Practical Wisdom[9]
10. That After the Resurrection there will not be One Will of the Saints with Each Other and with God in every respect (even though that which they will is one and the same for all) As Some Allege[10]
11. That it is not possible to say that there is only One Will in Christ, whether one calls it Natural or Freely Choosing, As Some Have Thought[11]

It may seem, glancing at this list, that the Opuscule is concerned for the most part with rather lengthy discussions of the

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1. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:12CD.
2. Ibid., 13B.
3. Ibid., 16B.
4. Ibid., 16C.
5. Ibid., 16D.
6. Ibid., 17C.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 20AB.
9. Ibid., 20D.
10. Ibid., 21D.
11. Ibid., 28B.

psychological processes of the act of willing. But the longest individual titled sections are in fact the tenth and the eleventh, and consequently, the main theme of the work is rather different, as the following outline illustrates:

I. Epistolary Introduction and Salutation

II. The Psychological Processes of the Act of Willing
   - A. Concerning the Natural Will, that is, the Faculty of Will
   - B. Concerning Wishing
   - C. Concerning Counsel, that is, Deliberation
   - D. Concerning Free Choice
   - E. Concerning the Things Upon Which We Deliberate
   - F. Concerning Gnomie
   - G. Concerning Power of Choice
   - H. Concerning Opinion
   - I. Concerning Understanding, in other words, Practical Wisdom

III. The Eschatological Consequences of Monotheletism and Their Refutation
   - A. Review of the Processes of the Act of Willing (PG 91:21D)
   - B. Oppositions and Choice, Deliberation and Dialectic (24B-C)
   - C. Free Choice as Not Moved by "The Things in the Middle" (24C)
   - D. The Principle of Plural Objects of the Will in the Eschaton (24D)
   - E. The Distinction Between Motion and the Mode of Motion (25A)
   - F. The Distinction Between One Will and One Object of the Will (25AB)

IV. Christological Monotheletism

A. The Exclusion of a Gnomic Will in Christ

B. The Exclusion of a Dialectic from the Humanity of Christ

V. Commentaries on Alleged "Monoenergist" Passages from the *Ambigua*

VI. Epistolary Conclusion and Scholia

We are already in a position to draw some very interesting observations about the structure and inner logic of St. Maximus' anti-monothelete polemic. First, after having defined the natural will in section 2, which includes a brief synopsis of the actual processes of willing, the Confessor then turns to consider each of the processes themselves in sections 2-9. Only *after* having done this does he arrive at the real goal of these considerations, their application in the eschatological situation of heaven in section 10. It is this section which is the real center of the Opuscule, for it is there, in a very brief but suggestive passage, that he addresses the most significant problem. As we shall see, it is here that St. Maximus turns to consider the processes of the act of willing from the standpoint of the themes which we have been discussing throughout the previous chapters: the dialectic of oppositions and the plurality of goods. The *order* of St. Maximus' exposition cannot be stressed too strongly, for only after having addressed the eschatological implications of Monotheletism does he address the actual christological heresy itself. These two foci - eschatology and Christology - are therefore, in his mind, quite clearly related; each is bound up in, and has the strongest implications for, the other. And if this is so, then his refutation of Origenism, and particularly the apokatastasis, an eschatological doctrine, has the profoundest implications for his Dyotheletism, and equally, his refutation of Monotheletism has the profoundest implications for his refutation of Origenism, the apokatastasis, and his doctrine of the will in the eschaton. With this outline of the Opuscule, and these preliminary thoughts in mind, we will now consider each point in greater detail.

II. The Eschatological and Christological Aspects of Free Choice

A. The Process of Willing

At the end of the section entitled "Concerning the Natural Will, that is, The Faculty of Will," St. Maximus gives a short synopsis of the process of the act of willing:

> For we desire before we deliberate; and after deliberating, we judge; and after judging, we freely choose that which has been shown by the judgement to be the better [course of action] over that which has been shown to be the worse.[12]

This closely parallels a more comprehensive synopsis given later in the crucial tenth section on the eschatological implications of confessing the monothelete heresy:

> For after intending it [i.e., that which is rational by nature] inquires. And after inquiring, it examines. And after examining, it deliberates. And after deliberating, it judges or decides. And after deciding, it freely chooses. And after freely choosing, it initiates [an action]. And after initiating [an action], it employs something. And in the employing [of an object] it ceases from the appetitive motion towards that thing. For no one makes use of something without having first initiated [the act]. And no one initiates [an act] without having first freely chosen it. And no one freely chooses something without having first decided [what to choose]. And no one decides [what to choose] without having first deliberated. And no one deliberates without having first examined [the alternatives]. And no one examines [the alternatives] without having first intended. And no one intends without having first reflected. And no one reflects without having first been moved by appetite. And no one is intelligently moved by appetite without being by nature rational. Therefore man being by nature a rational creature is appetitive, reflective, capable of intending, inquiring, examining, freely choosing, initiating [an act], and employing [something].[13]

This last passage is an expansion upon the previous one; the Confessor is apparently arguing, step by step, through the process in order to conclude that the will is as natural to man as are his

12. Ibid., 13A.

13. Ibid., 21D-24A.

rational processes. But by doing so, he has also reached the conclusion that free choice is constitutive of man's nature: "...man, being by nature a rational creature... is capable of freely choosing." It cannot be overemphasized that this conclusion has been reached within the context of the eschatological discussion of the consequences of Monotheletism.

It is thus extremely interesting that an almost identical scheme of the process of willing is to be found in an exclusively Christological context in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus (Disputatio cum Pyrrho)* which took place in July of 645 (the first Opuscule having been written around the year 641):

> Not only does His divine and uncreated nature have no natural compulsion, neither does His rational and created nature. For that which is by nature rational has as its natural ability the rational appetite proper to it. This is called the faculty of will of the rational soul. It is according to this that we reflect when willing, and in considering, we choose the things which we will. And when willing, we also inquire, examine, deliberate, judge, are inclined towards, choose, impell ourselves towards and make use of a thing.[14]

And as in the First Opuscule, the argument here is the same, leading to the conclusion that these processes are the processes of the human nature's will:

> As has already been said, if the rational appetite, in other words, willing and consideration, are proper to our nature, then so are deliberation, inquiry, examination, choice, judgement, inclination towards, election, the impelling of ourselves towards [a thing].[15]

Thus in each case the process is similar, that is to say, when both Christology and eschatology are the immediate contexts for his remarks, the list and the argument is for all intents and purposes the same, and this compells that the same conclusion be drawn in each case: free choice is proper to human nature and as such it is integral to the humanity both of Christ and the saints in the eschaton.

A table of the process of willing from the First Opuscule and the Disputation with Pyrrhus will illustrate the Confessor's consistency, not only in these different theological contexts, but also over a rather long period of time:

14. *DispPyr*, PG 91:293B-C.

15. Ibid.

First Opuscule (640-641)	Disputation (July 645)
Intention	Consideration
Inquiry	Inquiry
Examination	Examination
Deliberation	Deliberation
Judgement (or Decision)	Choice
Free Choice	Judgement
Initiation (of an action)	Inclination
Employment (of a thing)	Election
	Impellation (towards a thing)
	Employment (of a thing)

But what is the origin of such a scheme?

R.-A. Gauthier traces the basic conceptions involved in the Confessor's descriptions of the processes of willing back to Aristotle.[16] The latter notes in *On the Soul* that "anger should be defined as a certain mode of movement"[17] and this concept of the "mode of motion" is one also found in the First Opuscule:

> On the one hand, then, the faculty of will has been shown to be one with the rational principle of the nature of all men. But on the other hand, (it has been shown that) there is a distinction (between it and) the mode of its motion.[18]

While Aristotle's terminology is considerably less precise than that of the Confessor, the main pith of his remarks is the same: motion is a natural property of the soul,[19] though it may take

16. cf. R.-A. Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humain," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Mediéval*, pp. 54-55.

17. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, I:1:403A (English of the McKeon text, p. 537). Unless otherwise noted, English translations of citations from Aristotle are taken from this edition.

18. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:25A.

many different forms in any given instance. There are also modes of motion contrary to the soul's nature:

> if there be a movement natural to the soul, there must be a counter movement unnatural to it, and conversely."[20]

There are, however, even more interesting parallels between Maximus and Aristotle. It is in the latter that one meets three significant conceptions also to be found in the Confessor: first, that of the "real or apparent good," second, that of what things are "within our power," and third, the concept that choice and deliberation concern not ends but the means to those ends. Indeed, even the very language used by the two men is quite close:

I. Real or Apparent Goods

Aristotle	St. Maximus
"...the object of appetite always produces movement, but this may be either the real or the apparent good...."[21]	"So then gnomie is nothing else than an act of willing in a particular way, in relation to some real or assumed good...."[22]
"That wish is for the end has already been stated; some think it is for the good, others for the aparent good...."[23]	

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19. Unlike Maximus, for whom the various virtues are properties of nature, Aristotle denies that they can be natural properties. cf. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, II:1103a, and St. Maximus, *Disputation* PG 91:309B.
20. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, I:3:406a, p. 543.
21. Ibid., III:10:433a, Loeb Classical Library text, trans. W.S. Hett, p. 189.
22. *DispPyr*, PG 91:308C.
23. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III:4:1113a, p. 971.
24. Ibid. III:1:1111b, p. 968.
25. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:13B.
26. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III:2:1112a, p. 969.
27. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:16D.

II. The Things Within Our Power

Aristotle	St. Maximus
"...for in general, choice seems to relate to the things that are within our own power."[24]	"But free choice is a deliberative appetite for the courses of action that are within our power."[25]
"We deliberate about things that are within our power and can be done...."[26]	"We deliberate about the things within our power, and which may be brought to pass by our abilities...."[27]
"...and not every good can excite movement, but only the practical good."[28]	

III. Choice and Deliberation: Means not Ends

Aristotle	St. Maximus
"Deliberation is then employed in matters which... are uncertain in their issue...."[29]	"We deliberate about things within our own power, and which may be brought to pass by our abilities, and which have an unknown end."[30]
"We deliberate not about ends, but about means."[31]	"...counsel is not concerned with an end but with means to an end."[32]
"...Wish relates rather to the end, choice to the means."[33]	

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28. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, III:10:433a, pp.188-189, Loeb text.
29. Ibid., *Nicomachean Ethics*, III:3:1112b, pp.136-137, Loeb text.
30. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:16D.
31. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III:3:1112b, p. 970.
32. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:17A.

Suggestive as these parallels are between St. Maximus and Aristotle, however, one should not be too hasty in supposing that the Confessor relied immediately upon Aristotle, for he nowhere mentions the philosopher's name.[34] To whom, then, should one trace the influence of Aristotelean ideas in St. Maximus? After a lengthy examination of the processes of the will in both Aristotle and Maximus, R.-A. Gauthier concludes that one must see the immediate source for this Aristotelean influence in the Confessor's writings in Nemesius of Emessa, whom the Confessor had read "repeatedly and attentively," and whom St. Maximus "is often content to cite literally."[35] Here in Nemesius we are met with a number of texts and factors that command our attention.

As St. Maximus asserts, Nemesius also teaches that the soul is in a state of perpetual motion, and that this motion is proper to its nature.

> Nor, again, is it true that if any thing is naturally in motion it must be its nature also to come to rest. For it is the nature of the universe and the sun and the moon to be in motion, and equally it is their nature to be incapable of rest, seeing that rest is destruction to the soul, as to any perpetual mover.[36]

And both Nemesius and Maximus, unlike Aristotle, divide the forms of life into three basic categories: the vegetative, the perceptive (or the sentient), and the rational.[37]

But the real similarities between Nemesius and Maximus emerge when one turns to consider Nemesius' statements on free choice, and, by implication, all the processes of the soul when making a choice. Following Aristotle, Nemesius bequeaths to the Confessor the doctrinal legacy that free choice concerns not ends but means:

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33. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III:2:1111b, p. 968.

34. Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur," p. 71.

35. Ibid.

36. Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*, trans. and ed. William Telfer, in the *Library of Christian Classics*, Vol. IV, *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius Emesa*, p. 280.

37. Ibid., p. 345. cf. St. Maximus, *DispPyr*, PG 91:301A. For Aristotle there were five, not three, parts to the soul: vegetative, perceptive, locomotor, appetitive, and intellectual. This would seem to reinforce the idea that St. Maximus interprets Aristotle through the understanding of Nemesius.

> Wanting (βούλεσθαι) is a right word to use even when what we want is impossible of attainment; choice is the right word only when the thing lies within our power to attain it. So we may rightly say, 'I want to be immortal.' What we do not say is, 'I choose to be immortal.' For wanting applies to the end desired while choice concerns itself with the means towards the end, the relation being the same as that between what we want, and what we deliberate how to get. For, what we want is the final result, while what we deliberate about is the means for reaching that result.[38]

Nemesius goes on to conclude that, while opinion concerns universals, "choice has to do only with the particulars. For choice is of things to be done, and such things are specific."[39] Maximus quotes this almost verbatim in the First Opuscule: "Moreover, opinion concerns something universal, but free choice is about particulars, (that is), free choice is concerned with the particular courses of action, for these are the particulars."[40] These remarks also indicate something else. Both remarks indicate that choices are concerned with a plurality, and there is not the slightest suggestion in either Nemesius' or Maximus' remarks that these alternatives need necessarily differ from each other either in ontological or moral status, that is, that any one of them is "more" or "less" good, "real" as contrasted to "apparent", than the other. While they certainly *could* so differ, it nevertheless remains true that it is the principle of particularity and of plurality that is primarily in view.

This should come as no surprise, for it was Aristotle himself, whom Nemesius at least mentions by name, who says, "thus while that which causes movement is specifically one, viz., the faculty of appetite *qua* appetitive... the things which cause movement are many."[41] It is indeed the whole thrust of Aristotle's philosophy to concern itself, not with the tendency towards the reduction of all things to their universal forms, and then these forms increasingly to an all-encompassing unity, but with the particulars, with the plurality and diversity of the natural order itself. The general philosophical atmosphere is a powerful impetus for Nemesius and Maximus to adopt similar approaches in their considerations of the objects of choice. This consideration leads one to agree with Völker

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38. Ibid., p. 392, PG 40:732G-733A.

39. Ibid., p. 393, PG 40:733B.

40. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:20C.

41. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, III:10:433b, pp. 198-191, Loeb text.

that St. Maximus "often falls back upon Aristotle and reproduces (his) doctrine of motion so truly"[42] that the Confessor's doctrine, for whatever slight variations there may obtain between it and Aristotle's, remains substantially and in all important features Aristotelean, even though he is not drawing directly from Aristotle but obtains his Aristoteleanism through Nemesius.[43]

This is not to lessen Maximus' dependence upon Nemesius' reading of Aristotle. The Confessor adopts Nemesius' language often, as when he borrows Nemesius' conception of free choice as neither a "pure desire, nor judgement, nor even a plan in isolation but a combination of all three."[44] Furthermore, in a very cursory summary of the processes of willing, Nemesius defines an act of choice by the process of choosing itself, as a "kind of plan, followed by deliberation, which ends in decision."[45] And a little further onward, Nemesius expands this process by the inclusion of judgment: "For an act of choice is the preferring of one thing before another. No one prefers things, unless after deliberating, or chooses it, except he has passed a judgement."[46] This leads Nemesius to a consideration of the actual objects of choice themselves.

> We deliberate then, about things that depend on our free will and are within the compass of what we can accomplish; things, further, of which the outcome remains uncertain, that is to say, things that could happen in one way, but equally could happen in another way. We say 'dependent on our free will,' because deliberation only applies where there is something to be done, and deeds are what are dependent on our free will. For we do not deliberate about points of what is called 'theoretical philosophy,' no, nor about God, nor about things that are bound to happen (by which we mean things that are always happening in a particular way, as for example, the seasonal passage of the year), nor of things that, while they happen always in the same way, happen only at intervals, such as the rising and setting of the sun; nor again, of things that, though they do not by nature happen always in the same kind of way, yet do so for the most part, such as, that a sixty-year-old man is generally grey, or

42. Walter Völker, *Maximus Confessor als Meister des Geistlichen Lebens*, p. 40.

43. Ibid., cf. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus*, p. 109.

44. Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*, p. 393, cf. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:16B.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

> that a youth of twenty has down on his chin; nor, again, of things that fall out now one way and now another, without any rule, like the occurence of showers or droughts or hailstorms.... It is with this manner of things in mind that we say that subjects for deliberation are either 'dependent on our free will' or within the compass of 'our agency,'... neither do we deliberate about all things that can be done by our agency or lying within the scope of our free will. There must be the further condition that the outcome remains uncertain. For if the outcome is manifest and acknowledged, then the matter is no longer the subject for deliberation.[47]

That St. Maximus has simply lifted whole portions of this passage in the First Opuscule is readily apparent.[48]

But there is one crucial difference between Nemesius and St. Maximus which, though rather obvious, should not be overlooked regardless of how striking the parallels between them, and that difference is that, unlike Nemesius, the Confessor is writing for a christological, rather than a merely anthropological, purpose, and writing during the height of controversy and therefore for a purpose which is ultimately polemical. Maximus employs this vast Aristotelean arsenal in order to resolve the problem of the two wills of Christ. That is the difference. The parallel between St. Maximus and Nemesius is precisely in their indebtedness to Aristotle.[49] It is, in other words, the *application* to which these Aristotelean distinctions are put that is the crucial difference between Aristotle and Nemesius on the one hand, and St. Maximus on the other. Confronted by the monothelete heresy, the goal of St. Maximus in relying upon these distinctions is thus, according to the very apt assessment of Gauthier, "to establish two complementary truths, that, for the one part, Christ possessed a human will, and that for the other part, He did not possess a peccable will."[50] In the light of the organization of the First Opuscule, however, one must add more to these remarks. We have seen that St. Maximus organizes the Opuscule in such a manner that the eschatological question of the role of the human will in heaven is raised before that of whether there are one or two wills of Christ. It is therefore necessary to preface Gauthier's remarks with the following: The goal of the Confessor in relying upon these

47. Ibid., p. 495.

48. cf. p. 94, II. A.

49. cf. Gauthier, "Saint Maxime le Confesseur," pp. 51-53.

50. Ibid., pp. 77f.

crucial Aristotelean distinctions within the process of willing is also to establish two *further* complementary truths: that, for the one part, the saints in heaven possess a human will, and that for the other part, they do not possess a peccable will.

We are now in a position to summarize the results thus far. Once having done so, we shall better be able to detect the presence of those metaphysical and psychological elements which make such a doctrine possible. Only then will we be able to make certain logical inferences regarding the role of these psychological processes in the eschaton when St. Maximus, as did Origen before him, turns to consider the new situation that the will of the the saints will face in heaven. It is in regard to this new situation that the Confessor makes a very significant remark, a statement heavy with meaning: "When the Self-Subsistent Truth is made clearly manifest to all" then free choice will not be moved by any of "the things in the middle."[51] The meaning of this phrase, and particularly the expression "the things in the middle," must be sought within the context of the following points which have already been encountered.

Free choice must have multiple objects of choice from which to choose. Man deliberates and chooses only when confronted by several possible alternatives. But once this principle has been granted, an important distinction is to be made within it between a real and an apparent good. Our choices, in this world at least, are never between things wholly good or wholly evil, but between various relative degrees of goodness. Thus these objects of choice are subject to qualification; they are not merely plural, but they must also be "within our power" and their outcomes must be "uncertain" in order for there to be deliberation. All of these qualifying factors are, however, merely embellishments and clarifications of the main principle: choice must have a multiplicity of objects from which to choose. In a system where the ultimate object of man's appetite is an absolute Unity without distinctions, the concept of a real free choice is meaningless and completely vanishes, for there can be no Ultimate Multiplicity to which the will can be directed. That these objects of choice are subject to certain qualifications is a different matter, and is rather, for St. Maximus, purely a reflection on the psychological capabilities and limitations of the soul, and not so much qualities

51. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:24C.

of the objects themselves, as we shall see shortly. This is an important psychological departure from Aristotle and Nemesius alike, for whom the soul deliberates only over objects of choice whose outcomes are uncertain.

These considerations allow us to ask a very important question. Does the Confessor view the concept of a plurality of objects of choice as something inseparably connected to the concept that these objects must, for the soul at least, be of an uncertain outcome, and always within our power to perform or to attain to, as do Aristotle and Nemesius? Would St. Maximus, in other words, assert that where outcomes are certain there are no choices? Or does he seek to disentangle the qualifications that multiple objects of choice must always be of uncertain outcome and within our power from the other principle that the objects of choice are plural, that is, many? Can the soul be confronted by a true multiplicity of objects of choice whose outcomes are always certain, and where those objects of choice are not members of the category of "things within our power"? If so, what is the effect on the psychological processes of willing in this new situation? It is only by asking this question in this way, from a variety of perspectives, that one can understand the subtle assertions that the Confessor makes when he turns to consider the question of whether there is only one will of God and the saints in eternity, and it is to that most crucial passage that we now turn.

B. The Process of Willing in the Eschaton: Free Choice as not Moved by "The Things in the Middle" (τὰ μέσα), but by the Self-Subsistent Truth

The Confessor, observes Lars Thunberg in *Man and the Cosmos*, "often constructed his sentences like Chinese boxes which have to be opened slowly and with undisturbed attention, to reach the precious final truth he wanted to communicate to his readers."[52] And indeed, St. Maximus articulated his revolutionary doctrine of eschatological free choice within what must be one of his most ingeniously constructed, subtle, and tiny boxes.

52. Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, P. 29.

Therefore, to aid in its opening, I have numbered the main sections of the passage which concerns us with Roman numerals.

I. It follows that everything which is by nature capable of free choice is also able to judge between two opposite courses [of action]. And if it is capable of judging between opposite courses, then doubtless it is also able to choose freely between them. And if it is able to choose freely between them - since the motion toward both of them lies within its power - then it cannot be immutable by nature.

II. So then, since counsel, and judgement, and free choice are [all directed towards] uncertain things that are within our power, then when there are no uncertain things, as when the Self-Subsistent Truth has been made clearly manifest to all, then [it is the case] that free choice will not be moved by any of the things in the middle and which are within our power, for there will be no evaluation or deciding between opposite [courses of action], whereby we prefer the better to the worse [course of action]. But then in this case if free choice does not exist according to the law of nature that prevails at present - since all uncertainty has been removed from things - then it will only be an active and intellectual appetite.

III. Thus, it will only be directed towards the mystical enjoyment, in an ineffable manner, of that which is naturally the object of its appetite, towards which it is drawn by the things already enumerated. And the satiety of this appetite is the infinite extension (ἐπίτασις) of the appetite itself towards the things which are enjoyed, each one supernaturally partaking to the extent that he so desires.[53]

The argument in this densely packed passage may be summarized in the following outline, where the Roman numerals correspond to the numbered sections above, and the lettered section states the principle behind the argumentation:

I. Free Choice is the proper energy and activity of the rational creature's nature ("...it follows that everything which by nature is capable of free choice...").

53. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:24B-D.

A. In its natural state, free choice judges between opposites ("...is also able to judge between opposite courses [of action]").

B. Free Choice implies the motion towards one of these opposite courses of action or the other ("...since the motion towards both of them lies within its power").

C. Since motion is natural and implies change, the creature which has free choice is mutable by nature, and, in a certain way, must therefore choose. Since free choice is its proper natural energy and activity, if it ceases to choose, it ceases to be what it is.

D. Thus, there must be free choice for the saints in eternity if they are to remain proper and true to their nature as reason-endowed creatures.

II. In the new eschatological situation, however, there are no uncertain outcomes to free choices ("...when there are no uncertain things, as when the Self-Subsistent Truth has been made clearly manifest to all...").

A. If the objects of choice are no longer of an uncertain outcome, then this implies the cessation of those psychological processes connected with uncertainty, i.e., evaluation, decision, etc. ("...then [it is the case that] free choice will not be moved by any of the things in the middle and which are within our power, for there will be no evaluation or deciding between opposite [courses of action]"). This means that the objects of choice must have new properties if the conditions for this new psychological state are to be met:

1. No course of action or object of choice is more or less good than another: there is no better or worse, nor real or apparent, goods. There are only equal, and equally real, goods ("...whereby we prefer the better to the worse [course of action]").

2. Because they are all equal and equally real goods, all choices are equal in their outcome and certainly good ("...all uncertainty has been removed from things").

3. These objects are not within our power ("...free choice will not be moved by any of the things... which are within our power").

B. Thus, free choice exists according to a new principle corresponding to its deified state ("Free choice does not exist according to the law of nature that prevails at present..."); it is rather the ability to decide without involving any of the processes of the discursive reason, for these are no longer needed; it becomes a decision made without the mediation of these intervening processess ("...free choice will not be moved by any of the things in the middle..." and "...it will only be an active and intellectual appetite.").

III. Thus, there is a mystical theology of free choice, an eschatological state of synergy. It is *natural* for free choice to be directed towards a *supernatural* object or objects ("...it will only be directed towards the mystical enjoyment, in an ineffable manner, of that which is naturally the object of its appetite...").

A. Free Choice is drawn to these objects "by the things already enumerated."

B. Free choice achieves a state of satiety in the multitude of things it may choose, and the saints may partake of them to whatever extent they choose ("...and the satiety of this appetite is the infinite extension (επιτασις) of the appetite itself towards the things which are enjoyed, each one supernaturally partaking to the extent that he so desires.").

Two observations must be made about the argument of this passage. First, there is an ambiguity when St. Maximus speaks of the mystical enjoyment of the objects of free choice, for when he first speaks of this subject, he refers to the object of free choice in the *singular* - "Thus (free choice) will be directed towards... that which is naturally the *object* of its appetite" - and later speaks of it in the *plural* - "and the satiety [of this appetite] is the infinite extension (επιτασις) of the appetite itself towards the *things* which are enjoyed." This apparent contradiction between the unity and plurality of the object(s) of free choice is discussed in Chapter Six. It may be useful, however, to anticipate the results of that chapter

by glancing back at the argument of the passage. For there to be real free choice in the eschaton there must be really distinct objects from which to choose. Yet these objects cannot be more or less good than another; there is no "apparent good" and thus no uncertainty in choices. There might be, in other words, a very real unity between the objects of choice, such that, from the standpoint of their equal ontological "goodness", there is only one object of choice. There is a real unity and a real plurality evident in the language that St. Maximus uses in the passage, and he makes no attempt to resolve the difficulty by mitigating one or another term, i.e., the singularity or the plurality. Each of these objects must also be infinite, for there is an infinite straining of the will for them, such that one may partake of them "to whatever extent one wishes."

But the second point to be made is this: the main interest and focus of the passage, like that of the entire Opuscule, is upon the *psychology* of the act of willing in the eschaton. Insofar as the objects of the will in that situation *are* treated at all, they are outlined only to the extent that is required for the psychological assertions to make sense: if there is a suspension of the processes that are natural to humanity, processes that involve deliberation, hesitancy, and uncertainty, then that can only be when these processes are no longer needed, when they are confronted by objects of choice with very different properties than is the case in the natural situation. The processes of the will are thus still latent in human nature, but no longer contribute anything significant to the act of choosing.

There is, then, contained in this passage, a new doctrine of the psychology of the act of willing, and the outlines of a new conception of the objects of choice. The psychology elaborated means that this process of willing,

Concept (λόγος)
Wish (βούλησις)
Inquiry (ζήτησις)
Examination (σκέψις)
Deliberation (βούλευσις)
Judgement (κρίσις)
Decision, Election, or Free Choice (προαίρεσις),

which is representative of the creature in its normal state where all its choices are conditioned by uncertainty and hesitation, becomes something like this in the new deified and heavenly state:

Concept
Wish
Decision, Election, or Free Choice.

The argument, for all the complexity of the Confessor's sentences, is elegant and simple. Free choice is the inherent and proper activity of the rational creature; it is natural for the creature always to be deciding and choosing; indeed, free choice in this sense is an inherent aspect of the creature's mutability, of its very *creaturehood*. Furthermore, choices in this world are dialectically conditioned by good and evil, or more accurately, by the "real" or the "apparent" good, by relative degrees of goodness. And this in turn means that the creature's psychology is affected. In heaven, however, that dialectical condition has been removed. The two principles - opposition and distinction - have been divorced, and the former banished from consideration. What remains is a new psychological condition; there is no more uncertainty, and that in turn implies a new doctrine of the objects of choice themselves. For St. Maximus, therefore, there is no essential difference between freedom and free choice. Heavenly freedom is not the freedom from the necessity of choice, it is only freedom from the necessity of dialectically conditioned choices. Consequently, free choice, the natural activity of the rational creature, implies supernatural and eschatological freedom, but this freedom is not the reduction of all choices to an absolute, all-encompassing unity, to one and only one ultimate object of the will where, in the final analysis, there can be no real free choice; free choice remains because, St. Maximus has stated, there remains a real multiplicity of objects from which to choose. These objects are of a certain outcome, and must therefore be good and equally so. Being distinct and equally good, they are not in any sense morally opposed.

This means - at the risk of anticipating the arguments of chapters Six and Seven - that the Origenist and monothelete principles that what is natural is compelled have been refuted; it also means that the Origenist supposition of an unlimited series of successive falls and restorations has been excluded from St. Maximus' view of free choice in the eschaton, for the conditions of that Origenist supposition have been carefully excluded. Both Origen and Maximus affirmed free choice in the eschaton. But free choice was for Origen dialectically conditioned, and therefore the possibility of successive falls and restorations, if one asserted the

continuance of free choice in the eschaton, could not logically be denied. For St. Maximus, free choice is not fundamentally conditioned by the dialectics of opposition, but by multiple objects of choice which *may* or *may not* be dialectically conditioned, and therefore, there can be real free choices in heaven.

All these things in turn imply that for St. Maximus, Christ could indeed be truly free and yet not capable of sinning, since the metaphysical and psychological foundations of free choice in its deified state have already been articulated from the context of the interior dynamics of the will of the saints in heaven. Having thus articulated these foundations, the Confessor then moves to a consideration of the specifically christological aspects of Monotheletism. It is here that one meets the most difficult, problematical, and challenging aspect of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice, the gnomic will.

C. Christ and the Processes of Willing

The final titled section of the First Opuscule opens with a discussion of the question of whether or not the one will advocated by the Monotheletes was natural or freely choosing (προαιρετικόν). Maximus examines each possibility in turn. If the will was natural, then, he maintains, this position implies Apollinarianism and Arianism because

> in that case Christ will be different by nature from both His divine Father and from His undefiled Mother. For a natural will characterizes a nature. No reason can gainsay this point. But if it characterizes a nature, then those who say this clearly claim that Christ is a nature. So if there is such a 'christic' nature, then it is truly neither God by nature, nor man by nature, since by nature Christ is clearly not the Father, nor is He His Mother by nature. But if Christ is God by Nature, insofar as He is by nature Christ, then the one who says this is a polytheist, for he confesses one nature of the Father of God, not being by nature Christ, and another 'christic' nature, Christ also being God. And so the end of such an absurd idea can only be the condemned attitude of polytheism.[54]

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54. Ibid., PG 91:28B. T. F. Torrance in an important, and, unfortunately, often overlooked work entitled *Theology in Reconciliation*, makes some important observations concerning the relationships between Monotheletism and Apollinarianism, although his concerns are focused mainly upon the latter. cf.pp. 143-147.

The connection between Apollinarianism and Arianism on the one hand and Monotheletism on the other seems obscure. However, one must recall that, for Apollinarius,

> the Incarnation involved not so much an emptying of God as an emptying of man in respect to his human mind to make room for the Logos[55]

in what might be called a type of "kenotic theory in reverse."[56] The human mind must "make room for" the divine Logos because Apollinarius, like the Arians, operated with a conception of humanity and its properties - will and mind particularly - which is severely constricted by the principle of non-contradiction, though he comes, predictably enough, to conclusions diametrically opposed to those of the Arians, since his goal in using the principle is different. "The two principles of mind and will cannot reside together" because "one will conflict with the other"; thus two minds with opposing wills cannot exist in one and the same subject.[57] Consequently, Apollinarius concluded that the Incarnation resulted in Christ being "one composite being and nature moved solely by one will."[58] Thus, Apollinarianism moves through a real doctrinal Monotheletism towards an ultimate conclusion in Monophysitism. But if the one will of Christ was not natural, then what was it?

In a lengthy exposition, St. Maximus explores the only other alternative, that the will of Christ was freely choosing:

> Conversely, if the [will of Christ] is freely choosing, which they call the 'gnomic' will, either it will be completely in accordance with nature, having the mode of employment of the [various] courses of action within His power which is always in constant agreement with the rational principle of nature. Thus according to them [He will] not be impassible, but instead self-disciplined with regard to passion; and He will become good progressively in all that is good by nature.[59]

But this was clearly inadmissable, because

55. T.F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 144.

56. Ibid.

57. Leitzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea and seiner Schule, texte, und Untersuchungen*, p. 204, cited in Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 146.

58. Ibid., p. 277, cited Torrance, *Theology*, p. 147.

> His free choice, exercised in accordance with nature, will make Him that way, leading Him, when faced with alternative courses of action, to choose what is better in preference to what is worse. Otherwise it [can only be] contrary to nature, and so will display in Him that mode of employment [of the will] which corrupts the rational principle of nature.[60]

It was objectionable because it meant that Christ actually hesitated and wavered before good and evil choices. His free choice, if

> exercised in a manner contrary to nature will make Him such, leading Him, when faced with alternative courses of action, to choose what is worse in preference to what is better. For when He decides - whether correctly or incorrectly - in accordance with deliberation upon one course of action, with His free choice giving as it were the casting vote, then either He brings about through the right use [of His free choice] a logos in accordance with nature, or, through its wrong use, a mode [of will] (τρόπος) contrary to nature.[61]

In other words, that rational principle (λόγος) proper to human nature would subsist in Christ only by the correct employment of His will; He would therefore in a sense not be fully human: His human nature could subsist in Him only by the correct moral employment of His human will. And this had two further, and for St. Maximus, equally unsavoury consequences.

The first was Nestorianism, for if this freely choosing will, which was called the "gnomic" will, was a property of Christ's humanity, then that tended to make Christ a "mere man (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον), as Nestorius did by making Him by nature capable of choosing between opposite courses of action."[62]

This had a second consequence, that of viewing the one will, the freely choosing, or "gnomic will", as hypostatic. St. Maximus is quite unsparing in his criticism of this position. Those who would

59. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:28D, cf. *DispPyr*, PG 91:292D-293A, "the will and the mode of willing are not the same, just as the power of sight and the mode of perception are not the same." On this basis he can also affirm that "if the rational appetite, in other words, willing and consideration, are proper to our nature, then so are deliberation, inquiry, examination, choice, judgement, inclination towards, election...."

60. Ibid., 28D-29A.

61. Ibid., 29A, emphasis mine.

62. Ibid., 29B.

preserve Christ's free choice by making the will hypostatic would thus make Him incapable of moving both in accordance with nature and contrary to it. And this meant that Christ was other than the Father and the Spirit, for

> if free choice is a characteristic of the hypostasis of Christ, then by virtue of this will, they cut Him off from the Father and Holy Spirit, making Him different [from them] in will and thought. For that which is ascribed to the Son hypostatically, [that is], in a distinctive way, is certainly not shared by the Father and the Spirit. Those of the holy fathers, then, who spoke of the free choice proper to the humanity of Christ were referring to the appetitive power proper to nature by essence, in other words, our natural faculty of will or free choice, which exists in the Incarnate God by [His] appropriation [of human nature].[63]

That is, the problem of free choice in Christ is intimately related to the distinction between person and nature, and touches, therefore, upon the fundamental basis of Christian theology.

Within this passage itself, the Confessor offers no resolutions of the problem, nor does he clarify his application of person and nature to the category of free choice. He only hints at a possible solution when he introduces the conception of a mode of employment of the will, a phrase rich with Cappadocian overtones of the distinction between existence and mode of existence. But these passages also present another problem.

Thus far it would appear that the Confessor has excluded any degree of free choice in Christ, for a free choice that was empowered to move either towards good or evil things means that Christ could conceivably have chosen evil, could conceivably have sinned, and that made Him like any other man, a "mere man". But he quickly dispells any such notion; Christ is not without free choice, but this free choice, like that of the saints in the eschaton, is moved in a manner which corresponds with the deified state of humanity; it moves in a manner condign with its union with the Word:

> For the human [nature] of God is not, as with us, moved by a free choice [which is] framed through counsel, judgement, and a decision between opposite [courses of action], so that He may not be thought as changeable (τρεπτός) by nature in virtue of His [exercise of] free choice. For [His humanity] received an unwavering being (τὸ εἶναι) simultaneously with [its] union with God the Word.

63. Ibid., 29B-C.

> Moreover, it had that stable motion proper to the natural appetite of the faculty of will, or, as is more correct to say, it had an unmoved rest in Him by virtue of [its] most pure assumption and deification by God the Word.[64]

This passage is critically important, for it indicates that St. Maximus conceives of the choice of Christ's humanity in terms exactly parallel with the terms with which he views the free choice of the saints in heaven. Like them, Christ's choice is not moved or conditioned by dialectical oppositions, nor by the psychological processes "in the middle" between wish and decision. All the key phrases and concepts which we discovered in the previous section of the Opuscule are here. The psychology of Christ's free choice is similar to that of the saints in the eschaton, and like the saints in heaven, free choice, being a proper and natural activity of the human nature, is certainly to be found in Christ's humanity.[65]

There would, however, appear to be an inconsistency in the Confessor's doctrine at this precise point, for only a short space before this, he appeared to deny free choice to Christ in no uncertain terms. Yet in the passage cited immediately above, he appears to affirm it. It is absolutely essential, therefore, to observe quite closely what the Confessor is denying and what he is affirming. The "freely choosing will" was, for some of the Monotheletes, a "gnomic" will, and this terminology is the key to the dilemma at hand, for it is precisely this "gnomic will" which the Confessor denies to Christ,[66] for subsequently, and just as explicitly, the Confessor is found to be affirming that Christ does have free choice, though in a specially modified and deified state condign to the union of humanity with the Word in the Incarnation.

This terminology, that of the gnomic will, or gnomie, is being used by St. Maximus in a technical, specialized sense for the first time in the history of dogma, and thus it becomes a new formulation in the Christian tradition, not without its own special problems of interpretation. The fact that the Confessor asserts that both Christ and the saints have free choice, and the fact that he is aware of the synonymity in the fathers between free choice

64. Ibid., 32A-B.

65. cf. the discussion on p.169ff.

66. The gnomic will thus corresponds rather closely to the hypostatic will of the Monotheletes.

and the gnomic will points to yet another ambiguity in the Confessor's thought. This ambivalence appears in its sharpest form when he states that the saints are deified in heaven by their gnomies[67] and yet denies that Christ has a gnomic will. All of these facts would serve to indicate that for the Confessor at least the two terms are not synonymous, but this only further highlights the question of the meaning of the term "gnomic will" in St. Maximus' doctrine.

D. The Problem of the Gnomic Will

Much ink has been spilt over the meaning, role and significance of this Maximian conception of the gnomic will, but understandably so, for it is without doubt one of the most difficult and vexing of his conceptions, especially when considered from within the rather broad dogmatic context in which it is employed. In his introduction to Fr. Léthel's *Theologie de L'Agonie du Christ*, Fr. Le Guillou remarks that

> one of the first and principal difficulties which occurs in the categories employed by Maximus on the subject of the human will in certain of his works is that of the distinction between natural and gnomic will. The fact that he attributes the first to Christ, and not the second, often gives the impression that for him the human will of the Lord is a simple, 'will of nature' and not a free will.[68]

This difficulty, as previously suggested, arises from the identification of free choice with the gnomic will, an identification which Fr. Piret seems to accept in his book *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur*.[69] This identification is also suggested (though not, in the final analysis, it would seem, accepted) by Fr. John Meyendorff in *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*:

> By nature, as a creature, man not only is 'good', but he possesses the dynamic faculty of communicating with God and of progressing toward the divine image: this is his natural will. But there is also in him a faculty of discernment, a *free will that chooses, and therefore hesitates, and eventually can revolt against God. This is the gnomic will....*[70]

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67. cf. *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1084A.

68. Léthel, *Théologie de L'Agonie du Christ*, p. 9, from the introduction by M. J. le Guillou.

69. Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité*, p. 324.

Jaroslav Pelikan not only identifies the two concepts, but attributes the gnomic will (which he translates as the "deliberative will") to Christ, in clear contradiction to the Confessor's own position:

> To make the doctrine of two natural wills coherent, certain distinctions were necessary. It was helpful to make a distinction in the human nature of Christ between the natural will... which was ontologically distinct from the divine will, and the deliberative will, which was functionally identical with the divine will.[71]

And no less a scholar than Vladimir Lossky seems to imply this identification in his *Introduction to Orthodox Theology*:

> *...the deliberative will... is not a tendency of nature, but a possibility of free decision....* It does not exist in Christ other than as divine liberty: but one cannot predicate free will of God, for the single decision of the Son is kenosis....[72]

Elsewhere he is even more explicit in this identification, not only identifying the gnomic will with the will of choice, but going on to identify this will of choice with "the personal judgement that I bring to my natural will,"[73] thus tending to make judgment an almost exclusively personal property, as it was not for St. Maximus. In *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* Lossky again identifies free choice and the gnomic will.[74] Even a careful and meticulous specialist such as Lars Thunberg, while not explicitly identifying the two conceptions, comes rather close to it when he says that "the term 'choice' consequently comes rather close to gnome;"[75] an opinion which he does not appear to have modified in his most recent work on the Confessor, *Man and the Cosmos*.

One must not, however, interpret the identification of free choice and gnomic will on the part of these scholars to be due to some oversight on their part. The confusion and the difficulties

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70. John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 162, cf. p. 148. Italics are my emphasis, underlined words emphasized in the original.

71. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Volume 2, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*, p. 74.

72. Vladimir Lossky, *Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, pp. 107, cf. p. 106.

73. Ibid., p. 106.

74. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 125.

75. Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, P. 237.

arise instead from the fact that the term 'gnomie' and the even more precise technical terminology "gnomic will" are used ambiguously by St. Maximus himself. It is the newness of Maximus' use of this vocabulary which is the cause of the difficulties. In effect, he is struggling to find an adequate technical vocabulary for that part of the will which concerns the person solely and exclusively. As such, I do not believe that he ever manages to achieve a final, unwavering technical precision and meaning for the term.

Assuming that the distinction he is making between the natural will and the gnomic will is "not incongruent with the fathers' " teaching, Maximus nevertheless does acknowledge that "some people strongly insist that the fathers did not so speak of the will."[76] But he goes on to point out that the term gnomie itself

> has many different meanings in the Holy Scriptures and the holy fathers, as is clear to any who read them with care. Sometimes this same [term] means advice and suggestion... and sometimes it means counsel... and sometimes it is used to mean decree... and sometimes it means belief or faith, or viewpoint... and briefly, so as not to have to go through all the meanings proper to that word one by one, piling them all up in a great heap, I have discovered twenty-eight meanings of the term 'gnomie' in the Holy Scriptures and in the holy fathers. [Gnomie] does not have an unvarying general or specific meaning. Its sense is rather determined by the context.[77]

Therefore, in seeking for a formal and technical precision, a symbol, with which to designate the will not only in the natural, but also in the *hypostatic* realms of humanity, St. Maximus is making one of the most important elaborations to the formulations of the Christian tradition.[78]

But the gnomic will, even though characteristic of the hypostasis and distinctive of a particular person,[79] was to be strictly excluded from Christ, for if there were a gnomic will in Christ some might conclude that

> there was a constant quarrelling and arguing within Himself to some conclusion, and that He was for this reason two persons. For [the fathers] know that in life a distinction of gnomic wills is the

76. *TheoPol 16*, PG 91:213B.

77. *DispPyr*, PG 91:312B.

78. Meyendorff, *Christ*, p. 137.

79. *TheoPol 3*, PG 91:53C-D.

> entrance of sin and the [cause of] our separation from God. For evil is brought about by nothing else if not by the difference of our will in gnomie from the divine will....[80]

The gnomic will is thus not only rooted in the hypostasis, but in the *human created* hypostasis, for it is related to human sin as the means by which sin comes about. For this reason, it is to be distinguished from the nature and its properties as such.

> Thus, nothing natural opposes God, for all natural things were clearly produced and generated by Him; we are not subject to any accusation because of any of the things that exist in us essentially. But we are clearly subject to accusation because of our perversion of these natural things. Thus it is in this way that we deliberately (γνωμικῶς) become attached to all the different forms of evil.[81]

But the reasons that Maximus excludes the gnomic will from Christ lie much deeper than this.

In the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, Maximus not only excludes the gnomic will from Christ but alludes to his reasons for doing so:

> ...it is not possible to say that this [appropriated will] is a gnomic will, for how is it possible for a will to proceed from a will? Thus those who say that there is a gnomie in Christ, as the inquiry demonstrates, teach him to be merely a man, deliberating in a manner proper to ourselves, having ignorance, doubt, and opposition, since one only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt. We have by nature an appetite for that which is good in a particular way, this comes about through inquiry and counsel. Because of this, then, the gnomic will is fitly ascribed to us, *being the mode of the employment [of the will]*, and not its principle of nature: otherwise, nature [itself] would change innumerable times.[82]

There are several important factors to be taken into account here. First, the gnomic will is fitly ascribed "to us," that is, to every human individual. Second, it is indissoluably linked to hypostasis, since it is the mode of the employment of the will. Third, since it is the mode of the employment of the will, and since the will, in humanity, is a process involving several psychological elements, the gnomic will is indissoluably linked to those processes which involve doubt, uncertainty, hesitation, and deliberation. This means that the gnomic will, while not identical with, is

80. Ibid., 56B.

81. *TheoPol 7*, PG 91:80A-B.

82. *DispPyr*, PG 91:308C.

nevertheless inseparably connected to free choice.[83] But it is precisely *because* it is the mode of the employment of the will, and therefore the mode of the employment of free choice, that it is in the last analysis "not exactly synonymous" with free choice.[84]

By defining the gnomic will as a mode of the employment of the will, a mode of willing, the Confessor deliberately places his discussion within a triadological and christological, as opposed to a merely philosophical, context:

> The will and the mode of willing are not the same, just as the power of sight and the mode of perception are not the same. Will, just like sight, is of nature, and exists in all the things that are of the same nature and class. But the mode of willing, like the mode of perception - in other words, to will to walk or to will not to walk, and to look to the right or to the left, or up or down, or the contemplation of concupiscence or of the rational principles in beings - is a mode of the use of the will and of perception, and as such it exists only in the person using it, and distinguishes him from others.[85]

There is no mention of the gnomic will here; the discussion is focussed rather upon a metaphysical distinction between the categories of will and the mode of willing as such. When the Confessor does turn to the question of the gnomic will, this is more precisely and narrowly defined. It is still an act of willing in a particular way; it is still a mode of willing, but is so "in relation to some real or assumed good."[86] In other words, given the fact that the distinction of "existence" and "mode of existence" is a distinction that is applicable to both God and man, it would seem reasonable to infer that the gnomic will is one sub-category within the much larger category of "the mode of willing." To God, a good cannot be merely apparent; to man, however, the case is different.

When Maximus applies the category of the mode of willing of God Himself, the object of God's will is quite distinct from His will and His modes of willing:

> These negatives are not applicable to the will as such (i.e., to will to walk or to will not to walk), but only to the particular mode of

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83. Judgment, deliberation, etc. being the natural processes which lead up to free choice itself.

84. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, p. 201, n. 52.

85. *DispPyr*, PG 91:292D-293A.

86. Ibid., 308C.

> willing. In other words, things come to pass or do not come to pass by choices. If we assume that the things created by God and willed by Him pass out of existence, it does not follow that His essential and creative will... will also pass out of existence.[87]

As demonstrated in the previous discussion of Origen and Plotinus, these negatives - in God's case "to will to create or to will not to create" - do not imply opposition, but a multiplicity of different objects from which to choose, or of different things to will. The objects of will are thus both distinct from the will as such and from a particular mode of willing. The final demonstration that this category of the mode of willing is broader than, and inclusive of, the much smaller category of the gnomic will is powerfully attested by the fact that St. Sophronius, Maximus' spiritual master and guide, first used the slightly different category of the "mode of energy" not of sinful humanity, but of the divine Trinity of Persons. Each Person uniquely enhypostasized the one natural and indivisible will and energy of God. In his study of the theology of St. Sophronius, Christopher von Schönborn summarizes St. Sophronius' position in the following words:

> But for the same reason that the unity of the divine nature does not exclude the irreducible diversity of the Three Hypostases, the same also holds true for the unique energy; the common will, and the common counsel of the Trinity are 'made their own' by each of the persons according to 'the property by which it is characterised,' that is to say, its own proper hypostatic mode. Because the diversity of persons does not dissipate the unity of the nature, each person is able to effect, to act, according to his own irreducible hypostatic property without opposing himself to the other person. It is in this hypostatic liberty, which is not in conflict with the communion of the nature and of the will, that makes possible the movement of God outside Himself in Creation and again in Redemption. Theology and Economy are anchored in the same mystery of God, in the apophatic antimony of His Trinity which infinitely surpasses all necessity.[88]

In creation it is "God Who acts according to His own unique will in a unique motion moved by a unique operation." It is nevertheless the case that "each of the three hypostases operates according to His hypostatic property." Consequently, for St. Sophronius, just as the Father "is the eternal source both of the divine nature and of the divine hypostases, He is also the source of the design of the

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87. Ibid., 292D-293A.

88. Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem*, P. 130.

Economy."[89] And thus "Christ is Himself the revelation of the Father because He has as His hypostatic mode of being the accomplishment of the will of the Father."[90] For St. Sophronius, then, the distinction between existence and mode of existence, and the corresponding distinction between the will and the mode of willing, had as its only aim to render an account of God's freedom of action.[91] For St. Sophronius, the mode of willing peculiar to the Father is precisely that of "good pleasure" or benevolent design, that of the Son is the obedience which He offers to the Father.

This classification of the divine modes of willing, and its terminology, is repeated by St. Maximus. While there are not three gnomic wills in God, there are nevertheless three wills in God, "according to good pleasure, according to Economy, and according to consent."[92] Since Maximus is willing to apply the category of the "mode of willing" to the Holy Trinity, and since he also refuses to ascribe three gnomic wills in God,[93] the conclusion now becomes unavoidable that the gnomic will is a very special case or type of the mode of willing; it is, as it were, *a mode* of the mode of willing. But if this is the case, what kind of mode of the mode of willing is it?

Here several considerations bear upon the correct answer. The first, already encountered, is that the gnomic will, while certainly hypostatic, is invariably linked to ignorance, hesitancy and uncertainty; the term is perhaps best seen as a shorthand for these processes:

> Those who say that there is a gnomic will in Christ... teach Him to be a mere man, deliberating in a manner proper to ourselves, having ignorance, doubt, and opposition, since one only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt.[94]

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89. Ibid., p. 134.

90. Ibid., p. 135.

91. Ibid., P. 180, cf. p. 193.

92. St. Maximus, *Quaestiones et Dubia*, PG 90:801B.

93. cf. Meyendorff, *Christ*, pp. 144-145. "The denial of the gnomic will to the three divine Hypostases, like the denial that the will as such is hypostatic, is to be distinguished clearly from the fact that the will nevertheless has a unique enhypostatization in the three divine hypostases. Three hypostatic wills, or more accurately, three gnomic wills, would mean that there were three Gods."

Hesitancy, ignorance, and opposition are also intimately related to sin, and this point is expounded in a lengthy passage.

> ...nature is perfect, sin only excepted, which in any case is not of nature but of gnomie, a digression and fall contrary to the rational principle and law of nature.
>
> It is especially on account of this... that there is a distinction between the gnomie and the natural will.... For the one, the natural will, is, according to its correct definition, an appetitive power for what is according to nature. For all beings, especially rational beings, naturally feel an appetite for what is according to nature, and they have received this power from God... for if a being does not have an appetitive power for what is according to nature, how and whence could it have a desire for what does not exist at all, and has no being or movement? For only that which is non-being and without being is inactive, and in no way has any power or motion that exists in being. The gnomic will, on the other hand, is a voluntary impulse towards one of two alternatives. It is thus not distinctive of nature but strictly of hypostasis.
>
> Consequently, if someone insists that it is not possible to ascribe two wills to Him, even without there being opposition between them; if they mean two wills distinct in essence, I accept this; but if they mean two wills contradictory and conflicting, then their reasoning is false. For what is distinct is not for that reason always in conflict. Conflict arises only when the gnomie is moved in a manner contrary to nature. The distinction [of wills] is a work of the rational principle of each nature. The one, that is gnomie, can cause a conflict within nature, but the rational principle is patently a constituent of nature.[95]

Here one meets once again all the themes encountered in the previous chapters: the dialectic of oppositions, the attempt to disentangle this principle from that of plurality and distinction and to relocate it within a psychology of hestiancy and doubt. The gnomic will is therefore the root of sin, real or potential; sin does not accrue to the nature but to the person. This means that sin does not belong to nature, nor even to the mode of willing as such, but only to a particular mode of the mode of willing. The implication is that sin has been quite subtly but very effectively detached from free choice, no longer fundamentally conditioning it even if only in terms of potential sin. Free choice, conversely, is the property of the nature, not of person. Thus it is to the gnomic will, that is, to the use of free choice by the created hypostasis that

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94. *DispPyr*, PG 91:292D-293A.

95. *TheoPol 16*, PG 91:192A-193B.

sin and the dialectics of opposition are attached (though it need hardly be added that before the Fall of Man this attachment was only a potential for sin). It is, in the Confessor's own words, primarily on account of sin that there is a difference between the gnomic and natural wills. Gnomie, being either a potential for, or the actual misuse of, free choice and a real contradiction with the rational principle and law of nature, is to be carefully distinguished from human nature's appetitive power for what is in accordance with its rational principle. And since real or potential contradiction with this *Logos* or rational principle of nature may accrue only to the gnomic will, it is excluded in Christ for this reason, for in Christ there is no human hypostasis. His free choice, being a property of the human nature enhypostasized in the Eternal Word, is therefore not defined dialectically. The psychology of human free choice in Christ, like that of the saints in heaven, is not moved by any psychological process that would imply such opposition. Hence, *distinct* wills do not necessarily mean *opposing* or *conflicting* wills.[96]

The gnomic will, while it is still an hypostatic will, is nevertheless peccable, and it is thus, in the succinct but accurate summary of Fr. Garrigues, that mode of willing proper "to the *created* hypostasis, susceptible to sin."[97] Thus, while it is true that "the hypostasis, as the principle of individuality, gives form and peculiarity" to the natural will,[98] the form and peculiarity given to the human natural will by Christ is not gnomic, nor can it be, since He has no human hypostasis. The gnomic will thus approximates quite closely to a "personal and individual disposition... acquired through free human acts of decision, though always changeable."[99] As such, and because it is distinct from free choice, which is always a natural property, it may also be viewed as a *habit* which in some sense stands in a position "preparatory to election."[100] In Christ it is excluded because the natural human will has a new hypostatic

96. "...if they mean two wills distinct in essence, I accept this; but if they mean two wills that are contradictory and conflicting, then their reasoning is false. For what is distinct is not for that reason in conflict."

97. Garrigues, *La Charité avenir divin dè l'homme*, p. 90, n. 4, cf. Meyendorff, *Christ*, p. 148.

98. Justo Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought*, Vol II, *From Augustine to the Eve of the Reformation*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1971), p. 97.

99. Thunberg, *Microcosm*, pp. 229-230.

mode of willing. Because Christ's humanity has its personal center of existence in the Only-Begotten Son, "because it is 'enhypostasized' in the Logos Himself... Christ could thus truly be the Saviour of humanity because in Him there could never be any contradiction between natural will and gnomic will."[101] One might therefore summarise the processes of the act of willing by assigning the various factors involved in those processes to nature and person in the following manner:

Nature	Person
λόγος φύσεως	τρόπος ὑπάρξεως
Concept	
Wish	
Inquiry	
Examination	
Deliberation	
Judgement	
	Gnomic Will, Habit, or Disposition
Decision, Election, Free Choice	

It would seem, then, that Polycarp Sherwood could not be farther from the truth, if the analysis of the First Opuscule and related writings here presented is correct, when he says:

> Self-determination, liberty, is natural to the creature and remains whole and intact even where there is no possibility of choice as in the Lord, all of Whose acts while being perfectly free, because of the inherently natural power of self-determination, are wholly

100. Sherwood, from the introduction to Vol 26 of *Ancient Christian Writers: St. Maximus the Confessor, The Ascetic Life and the Centuries on Charity*, p. 62.

101. Meyendorff, *Christ*, pp. 37-38.

> determined, moved by the divine Person in whom the human nature exists and whose the human acts are.[102]

As free choice is precisely a natural, and not a personal property, it belongs to the faculty of will as such, and consequently Christ has been divested of human free choice on this view.

We have seen that the Confessor argues from a consideration of the deified free choice of the saints in heaven to a consideration of Christ's humanity; the saints in heaven make choices according to a psychology modified to suit the new situation, a situation where each of the objects presented to their wills is a distinct choice, but each an equally good choice. In this situation, the will is no longer confronted by the possibility that a good may only be an "apparent" good. Thus, the will is no longer moved by the intervening psychological processes between concept and decision, processes which involve doubt and uncertainty. The gnomic will then becomes a technical shorthand for designating the mode of the mode of willing proper to the human hypostasis, the potentiality for sin of that mode of the mode of willing, and the created hypostasis' relationship to the natural psychological processes involving doubt, hesitation and uncertainty.

The primary focus throughout this chapter has been upon the *psychology* of the act of willing. Insofar as the objects of choice themselves, or the three principles of Monotheletism have been mentioned, they have been mentioned in order to clarify that psychology. The focus of our attention must now shift, for two important questions remain to be answered:

1. If the saints in the eschaton and Christ in the Economy are not without free choice, and if there is a plurality of objects for free choice to choose, and various courses of action that may be pursued which are each equally good, then what precisely are those objects and what are their properties?
2. And how does St. Maximus refute the three principles of Monotheletism? What are the distinct choices for Christ at Gethsemane? Is there a deeply rooted opposition in Christ as the Monotheletes claimed, or do they indicate something else, something entirely different?

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102. Sherwood, *Ancient Christian Writers*, p. 57.

Chapter 6

The Plurality of Goods: The Refutation of Definitional Simplicity

> *Having a perfect knowledge of the Truth the members of the Kingdom of the Spirit make their choice after considering all the infinite number of possibilities, and come into no conflict with their other desires, since their choice, without any hesitation or mistakes, is always directed towards absolute good and absolute beauty.*
>
> *N. O. Lossky*[1]

The theme of the previous chapter focused primarily upon the psychological aspects of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice in the eschaton and in Christ. Such attention as was paid to the actual objects of choice necessitated by that psychology was done only with an end to clarifying that psychology. Consequently, several questions were left unanswered which must now be addressed. What is the plurality of the objects of choice which the saints choose in the eschaton? With this question, the ontological aspects of St. Maximus' doctrine, that is to say, those aspects of his doctrine of free choice which do not concern the interior psychological processes of the will, now become the main center of our attention. We will begin by an examination, in a very cursory manner, of St. Maximus' refutation of Origenism in the form of a plurality of goods in God, which is his refutation of the definitional understanding of the doctrine of the divine simplicity.[2] We will then see how the creature's motion and free choice in the eschaton are located in and directed towards this plurality. Focus throughout this discussion will be upon the proper interpretation of the phrase "ever-moving rest," a phrase often employed by St.

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1. N. O. Lossky, *Freedom of Will*, London: Williams and Norgate Ltd. 1932, p. 141.
2. cf. p. 65, note 4.

Maximus to describe the new conditions of creaturely motion in the eschaton.

I. St. Maximus and Origenism

As a result of the Origenist Problematic and its attendant theories concerning the Creation, the Fall, and the Apokatastasis, Origenism, in its systematically hardened Evagrian form, was condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553. The decisions of the Council were therefore "addressed less at Origen the exegete and mystic of the Commentaries and Homilies on Scripture as at the theologian of the *First Principles*", and thus the condemnations were directed particularly at "the cosmological and anthropological doctrines and their eschatological consequences."[3] But Origenism, in this systematized Evagrian form, was an organized cosmology which gave, in the words of Polycarp Sherwood, "sense to this world and to human destinies. It proferred an explanation of this cosmos and its vast variety; how it came to be from a unitary principle and how it was to return thither."[4] The action of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, therefore, while *condemning* this form of Origenism, had not *replaced* it. Its persistence into the seventh century is thus explained by this failure to provide another, more thoroughly Christian, world view which was equally consistent and coherent.[5]

With St. Maximus such a system - both Christocentric and Triadocentric - is proferred in the seventh of his *Ambigua*. His refutation of Origenism and its replacement by a more Christian cosmology is organized around several themes, the first of which "is his doctrine of free will," a doctrine outlined in the *Seventh Ambigua* but "not developed."[6] The second theme is closely wedded to the first, and that is his doctrine of motion and rest. The third theme is his doctrine of the One *Logos* and the many *logoi* of God. The fourth theme is the triadological scheme of his cosmology. Finally, there is the refutation of the underlying

3. Alain Riou, *Le Monde et L'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur*, p.34.

4. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus Confessor*, p. 91f.

5. Ibid., cf. Riou, *Le Monde*, p. 37.

6. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, pp. 91-92.

principle that unites these various themes together: the preexistent Henad of rational beings itself,[7] and the dialectic of oppositions which inevitably accompanied it.[8] These themes work together in the Confessor's system in a vast and intricate counterpoint, but their underlying purpose remains the same: to refute the doctrine of the Henad and its underlying definitional model of the divine simplicity. This refutation is accomplished by St. Maximus in his theory of the *logoi*.

II. The Plurality of Logoi

To the *logikoi* of Origenism, the preexistent rational creatures of the Henad, St. Maximus opposes his *logoi*, which, unlike the former, are not creatures in any sense but rather "rational principles", or simply "principles" which preexist in God. In this, the Confessor's conception of the *logoi* is rather closer to Origen's own conception of the *epinoiai* which are a

> plurality of aspects... (which) stand for the manifold characters which the Word presents either in His eternal being (e.g. Wisdom, Truth, Life) or as Incarnate (e.g. Healer, Door, Resurrection).[9]

These *logoi* therefore preexist, but are not to be identified with the doctrine of the preexistent Henad of *logikoi*. According to the Confessor, this latter doctrine teaches that

> we, who are naturally united (συμφυεις) with God, have our abode and foundation in Him. But [it is, however, a part of this conception that] Motion (Kinesis) came about, as a result of which these rational principles Became (Genesis) dispersed in different ways thus bringing this corporeal world into existence; for God foreknew the grace already prepared, whereby they were bound to bodies as a punishment for having sinned in a previous state of existence.[10]

The preexistent state of the creature in the Henad is therefore that of Rest, or Stasis. Motion, or Kinesis, is a Fall or lapse from this

7. Ibid., cf. Riou, *Le Monde*, P. 38f.

8. Riou, *Le Monde*, p. 45. This Riou calls the "pedagogy of opposition." If created beings "have quitted their good on an exceptional occasion better to appreciate the good by the experience of evil, then evil becomes a possible source of good and of love."

9. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Row 1978), p. 128.

10. *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1069AB.

unity which is followed by, and brings about, the Genesis of the corporeal world. The triadic scheme which St. Maximus therefore assigns to the Origenist cosmology is that of Stasis, Kinesis, Genesis. But St. Maximus responds by arguing that Motion, or Kinesis, cannot cause the Fall, since it is already part of the creaturely condition.

> For the divine is immovable, as filling all, and everything that passes from non-being into being is movable indeed, as impelled surely to some cause, then nothing moved has yet to come to a stop, as not yet reposing its power of movement from desire in the ultimate object of its appetite; for nothing else is apt to stop what is impelled except the appearance of that object of appetite. Hence nothing moved has come to a stop, as not yet attaining the ultimate object of appetite, since that, not yet appearing, has not stopped the movement of those that are impelled to it.[11]

There are three significant things to notice in this passage. First, motion is a part of the creaturely condition, for a certain motion was involved in its passing from non-existence into existence. Second, the creature's motion presupposes an ultimate object of its appetite, which is God. Motion is therefore not a cause of the creature's Fall but of its deification; it must move until it attains its ultimate object of appetite. Third, this attainment, which is the creature's deification by its ultimate object of appetite, is described as a state of rest.

To assert, as did Origenism, that each creature fell from a preexistent state meant that the Origenists "will probably (then) suppose that the rational beings will necessarily have *ad infinitum* the same changes of position (μετεμπτώσεις) in the same circumstances. For whatever they have been able once to scorn experimentally, there is no reason to prevent it from being forever possible."[12] And this fact called into question the Origenistic conception of the Good, as well as its Neoplatonic underpinnings, since It could only be experienced dialectically by experiencing Its opposite:

> But if they should say it was possible, but not wanted, [to abide in the good] because of the experience to be had of the contrary, then they will necessarily appreciate the fair not for itself but because of [its] contrary, [not because it is] naturally and properly lovable. For all that is not good in itself and lovable and capable of drawing all movement, is not properly fair. For this reason neither can it suitably retain the desire of those that take pleasure in it.[13]

11. Ibid., 1069B.

12. Ibid., 1069B.

This dialectic of oppositions is inherently intertwined, for St. Maximus, with the Origenistic conception of the Good, for "those who are of such a frame of mind would finally address their thanks to the evil, as being taught their duty through it and subsequently having learned how to hold their fixity in the fair."[14] The whole point of the Origenistic conception of the Good which St. Maximus is refuting in these passages is, according to Sherwood, "that there will always be the possibility of choice between good and evil,"[15] that is to say, that free choice is defined by means of a moral dialectic of oppositions.

The Confessor's hostility to this conception of free choice necessitates the reversal of the Origenistic triadic scheme of cosmology from Stasis, Kinesis, Genesis to Genesis, Kinesis, Stasis. For

> in the case of intelligible and sensible beings, which come into being from God, Genesis is to be conceived as prior to Kinesis, for it is not possible for any kind of Kinesis to exist before Genesis.... For not one of the beings which come to be... is immutable.... It is necessary, therefore, to consider that Kinesis is conceptually subsequent to the Genesis of these beings. And this motion they call a natural power [which] presses towards the End proper to it.[16]

And since "no created being is its own end because it is not self-caused"[17] God Himself is the End. Indeed, motion is proper to the creature in some sense even in the eschaton:

> No created being, ever, in any manner, stands fast while being moved by [its] natural power towards the End proper to that power; neither does it cease from the energy proper to that End, [even] after it is fixed upon it.... For to be End, Perfection and Impassibility belong to God alone, for He [alone] is immutable, complete and dispassionate.[18]

13. Ibid., cf. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 186.

14. Ibid., 1069D-1072A. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 186. Sherwood translates τὴν... πῆξιν as "stance."

15. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p.186.

16. *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1072B.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 1073B.

As God is by nature immutable, so motion is

> inherent in beings by nature. For everything that comes into existence is subject to movement since it is not self-moved or self-empowered. Since, therefore, rational beings are created, they are doubtless subject to movement because they proceed from a source by virtue of the being proper to nature, and because they move themselves towards an end by virtue of that well-being proper to gnomie.[19]

This last quotation is significant also for the fact that several aspects of the Confessor's theological system are linked: Motion, the middle term of the cosmological triad of Genesis, Kinesis, Stasis, is linked to the middle term of another triad: Being, Well-Being, and Ever-Being by way of gnomie.

It is against the background of this doctrine of creaturely motion that one should understand St. Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi*. Indeed, it is no accident that the doctrine of motion precedes the doctrine of the *logoi* in the *Seventh Ambigua*. What precisely are the *logoi* of God for the Confessor? And what is the precise relationship between these *logoi* and the creature's inherently natural power of motion and free choice? And what is the relationship of these two to the triad Being, Well-Being, and Ever-Being? These questions are answered in the lengthy section of the *Seventh Ambigua* from PG 1077C to 1081C.

The *logoi* are primarily principles and agencies by which God created the world, but they are also the One *Logos*, a point which gives a unique christological perspective to the doctrine:

> For if beings were brought into being by God out of non-being through the agency of a rational principle and wisdom... who then cannot see that the one Rational Principle *is in fact many rational principles*, and that created things were determined simultaneously by the agency of *this distinction which is undivided, because their attributes are distinct from each other and without confusion?* And again the many [rational principles] are in fact one [Rational Principle] existing without confusion by virtue of all things being offered up to Him through Him Who is their enessentialization and enhypostasization, God the Logos of the Father, Who is the source and cause of all things: 'For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him and in Him.' For He Himself subsisted, *along with the rational*

19. Ibid., 1073BC.

> *principles of the things which would come into existence, before the ages,* supporting by His good will the invisible and visible creation, for He created, and creates, all things at the proper time by the agency of a rational principle and wisdom proper to the whole and to each thing individually.[20]

The *logoi* thus constitute a genuine *plurality* which are distinct and without confusion with each other, but they are also One *Logos* and *preexist* with Him. This is no merely metaphysical conception of the *logoi*, however, for it is intimately bound up with the conception of the recapitulation of the creation in Jesus Christ: they are one with the One *Logos* in virtue of the fact that all things have been offered up to the Father in Christ. It is this christological grounding of the *logoi* in the *Logos* which permits St. Maximus to adapt the Chalcedonian formula of distinction without confusion to the context of the *logoi considered in and of themselves*, a clear anticipation of St. Gregory Palamas' language of the distinction between essence and energies, a distinction which "does not divide".[21] This is a patent denial of the Plotinian and Origenist models of simplicity. The *logoi* occupy a "middle" position between God and the created world, a position which itself is infinite, for "in God" there is "an infinite distinction and 'middle' (μέσον) between created things and the Uncreate."[22]

The *logoi* are thus the means of interpreting the doctrine of providence and foreknowledge in a thoroughly Christocentric way.

> *It is in reference to these rational principles that it was said that He knew all things before their Genesis,* since they already existed in Him and with Him Who is Himself the truth of all things.

But because the many *logoi* are in fact the One *Logos*,

> the many rational principles are one by being providentially attached, led, and offered up, to the One Rational Principle of the many, as to a source which possesses universal

20. Ibid., 1077C-1080A.

21. St. Gregory Palamas, *Theophanes* 940C. cf. *Triads*, trans. Nicholas Gendle, pp. 77 and 96: "...how could each (energy) provide Him with a name and manifest Him entirely, thanks to indivisible and supernatural simplicity, if He did not transcend all these energies? ... Essence and energy are thus not totally identical in God, even though He is entirely manifest in every energy, His essence being indivisible."(p. 96).

22. *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1077A.

> sovereignty, or as to a point which predetermines and unites all the radii [emanating] straight out of it.[23]

This image of the *logoi* as being the *radii* of a circle recalls the spatial imagery of heaven used by Plotinus, and we shall return to it presently.

Finally, and most importantly, the *logoi* are the conditions of the creature's innate natural motion of Well-Being:

> Source is that from which one receives being and goodness in one's nature by participation [in Its being and goodness]. End, which is the object of one's praise, is attained by a gnomic and free choice that are fastened to it unerringly after one finished the race with haste, by which he who received being from God becomes God. Thus, as good is proper to the nature and 'image' [of God in man], 'likeness' is acquired through the virtues, through one's innate ascent to one's own proper Source, and by appropriation. An apostolic saying confirms as much, and more besides: 'For in Him we live and move and have our being.' One has Genesis from God, through the agency of the incorruptible and rational principle of [one's] Being, which preexists (προοντα) in God and is Moved to God in accordance with the rational principle of [one's] Well-Being - which preexists in God - by the performance of the virtues. [Finally, one] lives in God in accordance with the rational principle of [one's] Ever-Being, [which also preexists] in God.[24]

But they are thus more than the conditions of the creature's innate natural motion of Well-Being; they are the very conditions of its deification: one has Genesis from the One *Logos* by means of and according to the *logos* of one's *Being*; one is *moved*, that is, has Kinesis in accordance with the rational principle of one's *Well-Being*; and finally, one has immortality by partaking of the rational principle of one's *Ever-Being*.[25] The plurality of *logoi* thus conditions the whole dynamism of creation, from its inception to its Redemption and eschatological End, for they are the connecting link between the triads Genesis, Kinesis, Stasis and Being, Well-Being, Ever-Being. Moreover, since the rational principles are in fact the one *Logos*, St. Maximus can express their general character "as a manifestation of a general law, formulated in the following way: 'The Word of God, and God, wills to effect the mystery of His embodiment always and in all.' "[26] In their

23. Ibid., 1081A,C.
24. Ibid., 1084A-B.
25. cf. Riou's summary, *Le Monde et L'Église*. p. 47.

plurality and Christocentricity, then, they constitute, according to Fr. Riou, a "metaphysical theory of movement," and a "conception of freedom."[27] They are divine "predeterminations" and indeed, "wills" of God[28] which man may freely choose to move towards or to reject and move away from;[29] they are an eternal calling of God to each creature, and not merely archetypes, a calling which is a calling to a participation in the Divine nature,[30] a calling which is without satiety, and therefore without any possibilities of a cessation of creaturely motion.

III. The Logoi as Divine and Uncreated Energies

The identification of St. Maximus' *logoi* with the notion of divine and uncreated energies has been the subject of some dispute amongst modern scholars, but the Confessor is indisputably unambiguous, not only in his identification of these two conceptions, but in his language on the divine simplicity. In the *Twenty-Second Ambigua* he says in no uncertain terms that

> *when the intellect naturally perceives all the logoi which are in beings, in the infinity of which it contemplates the energies of God, then, to speak truly, it reproduces the numerous and infinite differences in the divine energies which it perceives.* Then, as regards the employment of scientific inquiry (ἐπιστημονικῆς ἐρεύνης) into that which is really true, for reasons that one may readily appreciate (εἰκότως), it (the intellect) will find the power of any such inquiry [to be] ineffective and its method useless, for it has no means of understanding how God Who is truly none of the things that exist, and Who in the strict sense is all things, and yet beyond them all, [exists] in each *logos* of all particular things and in all the *logoi* together whereby all things exist. If, therefore, in a proper sense, *every divine energy properly signifies God indivisibly, wholly and entirely* through itself, in each thing according to the *logos* - whatever it may be - whereby it exists, *who is capable of conceiving and of saying exactly how, being wholly and entirely and altogether common to all and yet altogether particularly present in each of these realities, God is without part and division*, without [thereby] being diversely distributed in the infinite differences of these realities in which He exists as Being, and without thereby being contracted

26. *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1084C-D.
27. Riou, *Le Monde*, P. 49.
28. *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1084 AB.
29. Ibid., 1084C.
30. Riou, *Le Monde*, p. 57.

> according to the particular existence of each individual [*logos*], and also without fusing the differences of these realities into the sole and unique totality of them all, *but on the contrary that He is truly all in all, He Who never abandoned His own simplicity [which is] without parts?*[31]

The *logoi*, then, constitute a plurality, a plurality of energies, energies which are uncreated and divine.[32]

How then does St. Maximus understand the term "simplicity"? We have seen that, on the one hand, "if one rejects the distinction between essence and energy in God, then one must either view the created world as an effulgence of the divine nature" as did Neoplatonism and thus view the world "as 'one in essence with God', or one must reduce the other two persons of the Trinity to the level of created beings, because in such a case 'creation' differs in no way from 'generation' or 'procession.' "[33] The divine simplicity, to which the Confessor has explicitly referred, must be understood here in a sense other than that understood by Neoplatonism, for "the distinction between essence and energy in God conflicts, certainly with the philosophical view of the divine simplicity." But the same could also be said "of the distinction of the three persons within the Holy Trinity."[34] The way out of the dilemma is given by St. Maximus himself. While the energies are, according to the text just cited, possessed of "infinite and numerous differences" amongst themselves, nevertheless, "every divine energy properly signifies God indivisibly, wholly and entirely and altogether common to all and yet altogether particularly present in each of these realities" in such a manner that God, while present in each of the energies, is nevertheless "without part and division" and is moreover "truly all in all," never abandoning that simplicity which is without any partition.[35] This recalls an observation made

31. *Ambigua 22*, PG 91:1257A-B.

32. In all the polemics on the Palamite versus the Thomistic interpretations of St. Maximus' theology, many do not seem to have noticed that the divine energy of Christ, distinct from but "enessenced" in the divine essence, is as such uncreated, and is possessed of many "energies", wisdom, holiness, etc. St. Maximus thus uses the term "energy" both in a categorical sense, referring to the attributes or energies "around an essence," and in a more specific sense, as referring to a specific energy.

33. Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), p. 107.

34. Ibid., p. 106.

35. *TheoPol 16*, PG:207D-208A.

earlier and which is now expedient to reiterate.

It is necessary to distinguish, especially in St. Maximus, between the two models of "simplicity", between the two ways in which the term may be understood. The one is a philosophical and definitional understanding of simplicity, where the term actually functions as a great "metaphysical equals sign" which, far from preserving the real distinctions of the divine attributes, *formally identifies them.* The other understanding is a "symbolic" one, where the term simplicity functions rather as a symbol of God's absolute and ineffable unity, and therefore as a means or method whereby to insure that the divine essence, along with each of its energies or *logoi*, is wholly enhypostasized within each Person without any partition.[36] For St. Maximus, the term simplicity holds precisely this second significance, not only that the energies are inseparably connected to God and to each other, but also that they are in no way confused with God or each other. The import and tenor of this point is thoroughly Neo-Chalcedonian: one could transplant the terms "undivided" and "unconfused" from the christological plane, where they refer to the two natures and the two natural energies of Christ, to the theological plane, where they refer to the relationship of the energies not only to the essence but to each other. The energies are undivided, and therefore all equally divine and equally good *because they are inseparably connected to the divine essence and because God is wholly, and without partition, in each.* But they are also unconfused, and therefore *they are absolutely unique and distinct, and in no way may they be confused or "identified" with either the divine essence or with each other.*

Furthermore, and significantly, this symbolic understanding of the divine simplicity is repeated by St. Gregory Palamas, with specific reference to St. Maximus:

> As Maximus says, 'All the realities which are by essence contemplated around God have neither beginning nor end.' But since as he says, these realities... are numerous yet in no way diminish the notion of simplicity, no more will this luminous symbol (which is one of them) cause any detriment to the simple nature of God.[37]

36. cf. Chapter Four, p. 65, note 4.

37. St. Gregory Palamas, *Triads*, p. 78.

Moreover

> As Maximus says, 'The divine nature in three hypostases is entirely unoriginate, uncreated, not intelligible, simple and without composition, and so similarly in its will.' And the same could be said of all the natural energies belonging to the divinity.[38]

Not having a definitional, philosophical understanding of the divine simplicity, St. Gregory Palamas, like St. Maximus, does not identify or allow the confusion of the energies with each other:

> Providence is not the divine essence, and thus the essence of God is not alone unoriginate. There is in the same way only one unoriginate and uncreated prescience, that of God, *whereas prescience differs from it.*[39]

And in words that dimly recall the Arian controversy, St. Gregory cites from the Confessor's *Gnostic Centuries*:

> The wise Maximus thus rightly says that 'existence, life, holiness, and virtue are works of God that do not have a beginning in time,' and he adds (so that no one should think these things relate to this age, albeit in a nontemporal sense), 'There was never a time when virtue, goodness, holiness and immortality did not exist.'[40]

To have said all these things of the *logoi*-energies, however, does not exhaust the full import of the conception in St. Maximus' understanding. One must still relate the *logoi* to the category of the "things around God which are not God." This is to recall the circular imagery of heaven encountered earlier in this chapter and the Neoplatonic "spatial" imagery encountered in Chapter 2.

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38. Ibid., p. 82.

39. Ibid., p. 94. cf. St. Augustine, *Exp. Ad Rom*, 8:29. If Augustine's statements there are seen as a result of his definitional understanding of the divine simplicity, in which all the attributes are identical to all the other attributes (cf. *On the Trinity* 8:1:2) then that makes Jaroslav Pelikan's remarks all that more significant: "What was needed to correct and clarify the Augustinian doctrine was a more precise definition of predestination that would distinguish it from prescience." (*The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*), p. 321.

40. Ibid., p. 95. St. Gregory is here citing St. Maximus' *Gnostic Centuries* I:48 and 50, PG 90:1100D and 1101B.

IV. The "Spatial" Imagery of Heaven: Motion "Around" the Good

In this section it will become clear that the category of divine and uncreated energies, or *logoi*, is to be identified with that category of things and realities which is "around" (περί) God, in the sense of being "around" the divine essence. In the *Seventeenth Opuscule* the Confessor refers to this category in language that is reminiscent of the language of Plotinus' *Enneads*:

> Those things which are 'around the essence,' that is to say, its qualities, have that [type of] distinction proper to contradiction, such as life and death and other such things.[41]

Notably, however, this imagery is here clearly not meant solely of the divine essence; for Maximus it is indicative of essence as such. In the *Twenty-third Opuscule* this imagery is expanded upon:

> So essential and non-essential qualities are not another essence or really-existing thing *in and of themselves*, but are always a characteristic 'around the essence,' like colour in a body or knowledge in the soul, for as colour cannot be manifested without a body and knowledge cannot operate without a soul, so also that which is enessenced and enhypostasized is not to be considered apart from essence and hypostasis. For they do not exist in and of themselves, but rather are to be contemplated as being ever around the hypostasis.[42]

This new application to the hypostasis of the category of things "around" something reflects the personalism and trinitarianism of St. Maximus, as distinguished from the one-sidedly impersonal and metaphysical concerns of Neoplatonism, for not only are the various energies or attributes of an essence in and around that essence, but, since any given essence must be enhypostasized, they are also in and around a given hypostasis according to its unique mode of existence.[43]

But perhaps the most significant occurrence of this imagery appears in the Fifteenth Ambigua where this category is connected

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41. *TheoPol 17*, PG 91:212D. Notably, St. Maximus is not referring specifically to the divine essence. The phrase τὰ περι ουσιαν may be applied to any given essence.

42. *TheoPol 23*, PG 91:261B.

43. Ibid., 260D-261C.

with that of motion. Here St. Maximus speaks not of an essence in general, but of the essence of God:

> the motion of beings which completely receive an end in the infinity around God, in which all things that are moved receive rest. For this infinity is around God, but is not God, Who transcends it to an incomparable degree.[44]

The language used of this category of things which is "around God but which is not God" is the same as that used of the *logoi* earlier, and therefore one must conclude that for St. Maximus the *logoi*, divine and uncreated, nevertheless "occupy" this "space" around God, a space which is clearly said to be infinite. The creaturely motion which is directed towards this category as to its end and limit in God is elsewhere described in the words which become the watchwords of St. Maximus' doctrine of eternal motion: "evermoving."[45] This type of motion will be dealt with in the following section.

Here it is sufficient to observe that the preposition "around" as it occurs in St. Maximus is to be distinguished from its occurrences in Plotinus. While in the latter the term served to indicate the distinction of the Plotinian hypostases from the One, as well as the stability of their motion around the One, it nevertheless occurs here in St. Maximus in a system and context which deprives the word of all its Neoplatonic associations. In Neoplatonism the word "around" is heavily influenced by the definitional understanding of the divine simplicity, and thus the preposition "around" does not, in the last analysis, serve to indicate a categorical distinction between the One and its emanations. But in St. Maximus, while the usage may be neoplatonic, its meaning and intent are quite different, given the fact that St. Maximus works with a completely different, more symbolic, model of the divine simplicity. Here the preposition, while still indicating the infinity of the objects "around" God, also indicates that creaturely motion is not directed towards the all-encompassing simplicity, but rather towards that category "around God" itself. In other words, motion is directed towards the *logoi*. Thus the preposition also indicates something more; the distinction between God's essence and His *logoi*. Motion takes place amongst these *logoi* and is directed towards them; St.

44. *Ambigua 15*, PG 91:1220C.

45. *Ambigua 10*, PG 91:1113D.

Maximus is but using Plotinus' own conception: since the Nous and the World-Soul could not attain to the One, they had ever to move around it. It now remains only to see how this motion of creatures is conditioned by the objects - the energies or *logoi* - in which it takes place and towards which objects it is directed.

V. Motion of Creatures "Around" God

The crucial text in this regard, in which context all other texts referring to the eschatological motion of the creature should be placed, occurs in the *Questions from Thalassius*:

> *When nature clings to its rational principle by grace... then the changeable motion of those things which by nature are moved ceases... and they receive an End by the advent of Infinite Rest*, in which Infinite Rest the motion of things which are moved ceases.... Thus the world is a limited place and a state of rest that is circumscribed; and time is circumscribed motion, and it is because of that that the vital movement of the things within it has a changeable character. But when nature by energy and thought transcends place and time - in other words, the necessary presuppositions without which these things could not exist, that is to say, limited rest and motion - then it is united to providence without any intermediary, and finds in providence a rational principle that is simple and stable, and which has no circumscription of any kind, and for this reason no motion whatsoever.[46]

At this point it would appear that St. Maximus has contradicted himself in ruling out eschatological creaturely motion. But he immediately clarifies what type of motion he is ruling out:

> And for this very reason any nature which exists in this world exists in reference to time, and has changeable motion on account of the limited character of the world's rest, and also on account of the corruption to which it is liable through the alteration of time.[47]

In other words, with the cessation of time, changeable motion also ceases. But does this mean that motion itself has ceased altogether? No it does not, for it is now conditioned by new circumstances.

> Established by God on account of the natural unity in which it has come to exist, it will acquire an *evermoving rest and a stationary*

46. *Thal 50*, PG 90:757D-760A. Sherwood translates αλλαοιωτικος as "alternative".

47. Ibid., 760AB.

uniformity of motion around the same, one and only thing eternally.[48]

Here all the themes have been combined: the *logoi* and the category which is "around" God but which is not God, motion, and the triads of Genesis, Kinesis and Stasis. God becomes the principle in the eschaton of all that is proper to the creature. He is the *logos* of its Genesis because in the *logoi* the creature "ever becomes." He is the *logos* of its motion because the creature must ever move in the infinity of each *logos* and in the infinite plurality of the *logoi*.[49] He is the *logos* of its rest because the creature, created through the *logoi*, has them for its End and Goal. Polycarp Sherwood aptly summarizes the doctrine of this passage in a phrase beautiful for its succinctness and accuracy: for St. Maximus, "in the limitless stasis around God all alternative motion ceases."[50]

The interpretation of this "changeable motion," or what Sherwood calls "alternative motion", is not so simple. There are three ways of interpreting it:

1. St. Maximus means to exclude any kind of creaturely motion in the eschaton, including free choice. His doctrine of free choice would, in this interpretation, be rather similar to that of Neoplatonism where free choice is excluded in the eschaton to make way for a freedom from sin. Emphasis is placed, then, upon "alternative *motion*."

2. St. Maximus means only to exclude a certain *type* of creaturely motion, and hence a certain condition in which free choices have hitherto been made. Emphasis is now put upon "*alternative* motion." In this interpretation "alternative" or "changeable" motion should perhaps be taken in the sense of "alteriority." In other words, its significance here is the same as that in the Monothelete controversy and means much the same thing as opposition.

48. Ibid., 760A.

49. cf. *Ambigua* 22, PG 91:1257D.

50. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, p. 112. Sherwood, rather than translating the preposition περι as "around" uses "about" instead. I have used the former throughout the essay as it is more in keeping with its meaning in the neoplatonic texts examined earlier. cf. Plotinus' *Enneads* III:7:6, p. 313; III:7:7, 9 pp. 415-417. Page references are to the *Loeb Classical Library* edition.

Maximus thus means to exclude a certain type of motion, that which is conditioned by the opposition between good and evil. The phrase thus describes the *relationship itself* between God and the man in the eschaton; it describes his deified state. Man's post-lapsarian state has been excluded in such a manner, then, that the eschatological *non posse peccare* does not become identified with the *non posse eligere*.

3. The Confessor means only to exclude a certain type of interior psychological process of free choice, "alternative" or "changeable" in this case meaning, albeit elliptically, the "deliberation" and "hesitation" which are associated with the fallen and dialectical state of man's free choice.

Interpretation 1 has already been excluded by our examination of the *First Opuscule*. Motion is an inherent part of the creaturely condition, and to prohibit the creature the use of its natural powers, even in the eschaton, would be to commit oneself to a form of anthropological Apollinarianism. The first interpretation is therefore not correct. And while it may be said that 2 implies 3, one must opt for 2 as being the best interpretation of the phrase, for 3, the psychological implications of deification for free choice, has already been dealt with at greater length and in much different vocabulary in the *First Opuscule*. The phrase should therefore not be taken as referring to the interior psychological processes of the rational creature, but as referring to the relationship of the creature to God, that is, as a metaphysical description of its motion. That St. Maximus means it to be taken in such a sense is indicated by the fact that he replaces the dialectic of alteriority and opposition with another dialectic, that of the soul's ever-moving rest, a terminology borrowed once again from Plotinus[51] and yet once again resulting in an entirely different effect.

One should not dismiss this new phrase, "ever-moving rest", as mere "mysticism" with no meaning or importance of its own. St. Maximus, well aware of the role of dialectic in both his opponents' theology and his own, would have been loath to use words in such a manner. Indeed, the same phrase is used in the *Theological and Polemical Works*. In the introduction to the *Sixteenth Opuscule*, the Confessor comments on it in regard to the fulfillment of desire:

51. *Enneads* V:1:12, p. 51; II:2:3, p. 51; II:2:2, p. 47.

> One attains the fulfillment of one's desire, the complete victory within oneself of that for which he longs, a cessation of motion in an ever-moving rest; and through this the death which of old gained power over nature is destroyed, for the nature within him is not overcome by sin.[52]

The same terminology is used again in the *Twentieth Opuscule* where this ever-moving rest is connected to the conception of infinite yearning or straining, the *epektasis*, and to that of eternal ascent:

> You, reverend father... have made the end of your course perpetual progress (ἐπέκτασις), the end of your reason an ever-moving ascension towards the Word....[53]

With regards to the *epektasis*, this infinite straining and perpetual progress, Lars Thunberg has recently written in his book *Man and the Cosmos* that

> In regard to the concept of *epectasis* Maximus is skeptical of its philosophical consequences; he cannot identify eternal rest with a movement, since this implies a relativization of both rest and movement. Yet, he is quite sympathetic toward the Gregorian paradox of divine presence and human distance at the same time.[54]

But as we shall see, this constitutes a failure on Thunberg's part to pursue the christological and eschatological sense of motion within the context of the phrase "ever-moving rest."

Rest for St. Maximus indicates the divine and objective aspect of human deification. God, being immutable, is Rest, and therefore is the goal of man's motion. Rest is therefore one of the *logoi* of the divine nature and consequently one of the *logoi* - precisely that of man's Ever-Being - of man's motion. This connection of rest to the divine nature, indeed to the divine freedom, and its role as the end of human motion, is clearly what St. Maximus has in view:

> For since reason is free by nature it has rejected appetite and is not sensitive to its regard and has settled the complete force of its soul on the immovable divine freedom. Wishing to give this to his disciples the Lord says, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.' He calls rest the victory of the divine kingdom, insofar as it

52. *TheoPol 16*, PG 91:185A.

53. *TheoPol 20*, PG 91:228B.

54. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, p. 145.

> produces in those who are worthy a sovereignty released from any bondage.[55]

This Rest, if interpreted as one of the *logoi*-energies, and therefore as "occupying" that infinite "space" around the divine essence, is thus not at all contradictory to the main tenor of the Confessor's theology of motion and free choice. He can comfortably describe the motion of the creature as an *epektasis* not only because "the human capacity for the infinite God is itself infinite"[56] but also because motion occurs precisely in that "infinity around God" where all "*alternative* motion ceases." Rest therefore indicates the divine energy as it comes down to man. Loosely allied to this term in the triad "ever-moving rest" is the adverb "ever" itself. But whereas the term "rest" indicates solely the divine *logos* and predetermination which is the goal of the creature's motion, the adverb "ever" plays a dual role. On the one hand, it signifies the *creaturely* aspect of motion: the creature must *ever* move because motion is an inherent power of its nature as a creature, and as such, the creature must *ever* move because its desire for God is infinite. To deprive a creature of motion, as to deprive it of any of its natural powers, is also to deprive it of its very existence.[57] But the term "ever" also signifies the divine aspect of motion as well, the infinity around God in which the creature moves. The creature ever moves because the "space" of this infinity is infinite.

This leaves the middle term of the triad of "ever-moving rest", the motion itself. Motion is an inherent quality of the rational creature, a quality which is inseparable from its essence, for God "in His goodness, creating every soul to His image, brings it into being to be self-moving (αὐτοκίνητον)."[58] Furthermore, "every energy, circumscribed naturally by its own principle, is the end of *essential movement* logically preceding it."[59] Motion, in other words, comes to its end in energy, which in this case is the

55. *Commentary on the Our Father*, PG 90:885D-888A. English translations are taken from *The Classics of Western Spirituality* series, trans. George Berthold, p. 108.

56. cf. George Berthold, *St. Maximus the Confessor, Selected Writings* in *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, p. 125, note 93.

57. cf. *DispPyr*, PG 91:297C.

58. *Gnostic Centuries*, PG 90:1088A, p. 130.

59. Ibid., PG 90:1084B, p. 129. Berthold translates ἐνέργεια as "act". I have taken the liberty of modifying his translation at this point.

energy proper to the particular nature moving. But it need not be. For each being can determine its own energy in respect to the divine energy: "God... rests when each being, having obtained the divine energy in due measure, will determine its own natural energy with respect to God."[60] Here it should be noted that this energy is divine and therefore uncreated, that it is the goal of the creature's motion, and that it is "around" God. Maximus notes further that these

> works of God which did not happen to begin in time are participated beings, in which participated beings share according to grace, for example, goodness and all that the term implies, that is, life, immortality, *simplicity*, immutability, and infinity and *such things which are essentially contemplated around him; they are also God's works and yet they did not begin in time.*[61]

It is notable that in this passage, St. Maximus explicitly ascribes simplicity to the category of things "around God", that is to say, it is no longer a definition of the essence but is itself one of its energies. These God "infinitely transcends"[62] but yet in such a manner that He is never without them, for they are His own essential energies, for "there never was a time when there existed neither virtue nor goodness nor holiness nor immortality."[63] Thus "God never ceases from goods, as he never began them."[64] Consequently, the creature, "always in movement toward God,"[65] within the category of energies around God, unites his gnomie to the principle or *logos* of his nature[66] and thus achieves "one single movement of the gnomie which chooses only virtue."[67] And that is because the things to which the will moves are now the *logoi*, each divine, each infinite, each unique, and each equally good:

> He (the Lord) has made it very clear that when the gnomie has been united to the principle of nature, the free choice of those who have kept it so will not be in conflict with God since nothing is considered

60. Ibid., PG 90:1100C, p. 136.

61. Ibid., 1100D. Berthold translates περι αυτον as "in regard to him". I have again modified his translation.

62. Ibid., 1101A, p. 137.

63. Ibid., 1101B, p. 137.

64. Ibid., 1096D, p. 135.

65. *Commentary on the Our Father*, PG 90:893CD, p. 112.

66. Ibid., 901C, p. 115.

67. Ibid., 892A, p. 110.

> unreasonable in the principle of nature, which is as well a natural and divine law, *when the movement of the gnomie is made in conformity with it. And if there is nothing unreasonable in the principle of nature it is likely that the gnomie moved according to the principle of nature will have an activity habitually corresponding in all things to God.*[68]

In this densely packed passage the distinction of gnomie from free choice is quite explicit, but the important point is that motion in the creature is, in the eschatological context of the quotation, wedded to the divine *logoi* of its nature. There can no longer be any doubt: Free choice in the eschaton is moved towards the plurality of divine, infinite and eternal goods, each unique objects so that there can be real free choices, and each equally good so that there is no opposition of good and evil in the creature's choice. The individual creature's gnomie is thus habitually conformed to God.[69]

But even though "perpetual and unceasing movement" is the creature's natural property as a creature, and "God is the truth around which the mind moves continuously and enduringly", in which the mind "can never cease its movement since it does not find any discontinuity there,"[70] and even though the soul thus acquires a "steadfastness in the good" and an "unalterable habit of choice (προαίρεσιν)"[71] - even though all these things are true, this is not a case of simply one metaphysical system - that of a real and ultimate plurality of goods in the good - opposed to another - that of a reduction of all specificity and diversity to an absolute metaphysical simplicity. It is above all else a Christocentric vision of the eschaton, for Christ, the One *Logos* of all the divine and uncreated *logoi*, stands at the center of the circle of those *logoi*:

> It is he who encloses in himself all beings by the unique, simple, and infinitely wise power of his goodness. As the centre of straight lines that radiate from him he does not allow by his unique, simple and single cause and power that the principles of beings become disjoined at the periphery but rather he circumscribed their extension in a circle and brings back to himself the distinctive elements of being which he himself brought into existence.[72]

68. Ibid., 901D, p. 116.

69. Ibid., 893B, p. 111.

70. *Mystagogy*, PG 91:677A, p. 192.

71. Ibid., 676A, p. 191.

There is thus an activity and movement of the creature that is now permeated by the divine *logoi*, a result of the *perichoresis* of energies in Christ. "Ever-moving rest" consequently becomes the Maximian triad which best expresses not only this christological aspect of the *perichoresis*, but also the synergistic eschatological consequences that follow from it.

But can St. Maximus actually speak of choice, not only in regard to some subject, but actually being in some sense around it? Here his language is most illuminating and most suggestive, and, not surprisingly, is to be found in the *First Opuscule* of the *Theological and Polemical Works*:

> Thus, free choice, and the object of free choice, [in other words,] that thing which is chosen before another thing, [come] from counsel [and is that thing] *about which free choice [deliberates]* (περὶ οὗ ἡ προαίρεσις).[73]

One must certainly not press this point too far, for the most likely rendering of περι in this context with the genitive is the weaker English translation "about" or "concerning". However, there are instances of περι with the genitive where the preposition should be translated as "around." While in this case there is no *compulsion* so to translate it, one cannot in the final analysis, exclude it. Such a rendering of περι as "around" would be congruent to St. Maximus' spatial imagery elsewhere, and even in English one often speaks of hesitating "over" certain choices to be made.

The two aspects of St. Maximus' doctrine of the eschaton, the creaturely and the uncreated, may thus be summarized by the two expressions, "ever-moving rest" and Sherwood's very apt summary of *Thalassius* 757: "in the limitless stasis around God all alternative motion ceases". The creature *ever*-moves because on the one hand, there is the infinite plurality of infinite *logoi* which are "around" God. It is not movement which ceases, but only one type of motion, that connected with alteration, hesitation, and opposition. On the other hand, the creature *ever*-moves because it is a creature, and motion is an inherent natural power. Thus the creature also ever-*moves*, that is, remains active as a creature, both moving and choosing, because not only is motion its inherent property, but also because, on the side of the Creator, there are real

72. 668B, p. 187.

73. *TheoPol I*, PG 91:16B.

distinct and equally good objects to which its choice and motion are directed, the divine *logoi*. And finally, the equality of goodness and divinity in each divine *logos* gives rise in the creature to the cessation of doubt and hesitancy in its choices. Thus they become the *logoi* not only of the creature's movement but also of its *rest*. Briefly put, the neoplatonic definitional model of the divine simplicity, and its accompanying dialectical definition of free choice in terms of the opposition between good and evil, has been overthrown. In its place has been put the Trinitarian distinction of essence and energies, and therefore a definition of free choice which ultimately does not depend upon dialectical oppositions. This position may be summarized in the following table:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Creature</th><th>Creator</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>"... in the limitless stasis around God...."</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">ever-
moving
rest</td><td>infinite
distinct and plural logoi
equally good and divine</td></tr>
<tr><td>Psychological Aspect
Cessation of the things "in the middle," i.e. hesitation, doubt, deliberation</td><td>Relational Aspect
Cessation of alternative motion connected with these.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">"...all alternative motion ceases."</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

"Eschatology implies impeccability"[74] for St. Maximus. That is, corresponding to God Who is the "Unmoved Mover"[75] the creature

74. Juan Miguel Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur: la Charité avenir Divin de l'Homme*, p. 125.

75. To my knowledge the Confessor does not actually himself use the expression "Unmoved Mover" of God; the observation is therefore my own.

attains an "ever-moving rest."

All the salient features of St. Maximus' eschatological conception of free choice have now been articulated. In place of a dialectical conception of free choice, St. Maximus has put a conception of free choice based upon the plurality of goods, which are the divine and uncreated *logoi* which are "around" God and in which the creature moves. This in turns implies a thorough-going refutation of Origenism, for in place of a preexistent motion, dialectically conceived and therefore inevitably linked to sin and the Fall, St. Maximus has substituted a doctrine of eschatological motion which is not dialectically conditioned. This in turn is because the simplicity of God has been differently construed. Simplicity, for St. Maximus, does not lead to a "mathematical" identity of the attributes amongst themselves, but to a distinction between the divine essence and what is "around" it.

But there are still difficult questions that remain to be answered. How does St. Maximus apply this conception of free choice christologically, or what parallels are to be found between it and his refutation of the three principles of Monotheletism? And finally, how does the Confessor avoid the apokatastasis? For if there is only one hypostatic will of Christ, then all of human nature is irresistibly predestined to the resurrection and to eternal bliss. But the same may be said of the dyothelete position: if the will of Christ's human nature is precisely a natural will, and this will has been fixed in the good, then all men are likewise irresistibly predestined to bliss. It is here that the Confessor's doctrine is at its most complex, and it is to that complexity that attention is now directed.

Chapter 7

The Refutation of the Three Principles of Monotheletism

The second (Adam), therefore, can do more than this... by the will of the Spirit he overcomes the will of the flesh, that lusteth in opposition to it.

St. Augustine, On Rebuke and Grace[1]

Western theologians seem to have been somewhat less successful in appropriating the results of the Eastern Controversies over one or two wills in Christ, as is evident in Anselm's statement that 'Christ came to do not his own will but that of the Father, because the righteous will that he had did not come from (his) humanity but from (his) divinity.'

Jaroslav Pelikan, The Growth of Medieval Theology[2]

I. The Refutation of Monothelete Principles One and Two: That What is Natural is Compelled and Therefore That the Will is Hypostatic

"The Word of God," St. Maximus states quite unequivocally, "and God, wills the mystery of His embodiment to be effected always and in all."[3] For the Confessor, then, the affirmation of I Timothy 2:3-4 - "God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" - is to be understood Christologically, "for there is one God, and one

---

1. St. Augustine, *On Rebuke and Grace*, 31, in *The Anti-Pelagian Writings*, NPNF, First Series, Volume V, p. 484.

2. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, pp. 116-117.

3. St. Maximus, *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1084CD.

mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all (I Timothy 2:5-6)." For St. Maximus, this Christocentricity inevitably raised the question of an apokatastasis. By becoming incarnate, the one *Logos* had in fact prepared the way for an apokatastasis, for "the fact that the *Logos* assumed human nature as such implied the universal validity of redemption."[4] This *Logos* was, furthermore, the many *logoi*[5] and thus St. Maximus is compelled to speak of an "apokatastasis to that rational principle (λόγος)" by which one was created.[6] Consequently, even though the Origenist doctrine of the apokatastasis had been formally condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553, it was nevertheless a logical implication both of St. Maximus' own christocentric method as well as of his doctrine of the eternal *logoi*: an apokatastasis had to follow necessarily from the fact of Christ's human nature which was consubstantial to all men, for this consubstantiality gave His resurrection a material universality. And if there was an apokatastasis "to that rational principle" by which one was created, and if this rational principle was one with the eternal Son and *Logos* of God, then there seems to be present in St. Maximus' system a determinism no less forceful and problematical than that inherent in the monothelete doctrine which tended to view Christ's humanity as a passive instrument of His deity. Human nature, in the words of Fr. Georges Florovsky, is thus

4. John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, p. 163.

5. *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1081C.

6. Ibid., 1080C. cf. Brian E. Daley, S. F. "Apokatastasis and 'Honorable Silence' in the Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor": "... it seems more accurate to say that Maximus here simply presents three of Gregory (of Nyssa's) ways of using the concept of *apokatastasis* which he considers acceptable - a moral sense, a corporeal one and a psychological or spiritual one - leaving the more controversial substance of the Origenist doctrine... undiscussed." (p. 325) "... we find in his (Maximus') works no polemics against the concept of *apokatastasis*, but rather a cautious tendency to recast and reintegrate it on his own theological grounds." (p. 328). One of the things which makes St. Maximus' doctrine of the apokatastasis unique is the Confessor's "strong belief in the universal saving will of God, *already revealed triumphant in the Incarnation of the Word and in His death on the Cross.*" (p. 328, emphasis mine). Thus Daley concludes that "while he mounts no direct attack on the Origenist conception of *apokatastasis*, he offers... a rather different eschatological prospect, and uses the word *apokatastasis* - when he does use it - in a very different way." (p. 329).

> healed and restored with a certain compulsion, by the mighty power of God's omnipotent and invincible grace. One may even say, by some violence of grace. The wholeness is in a way forced upon human nature, for in Christ all human nature (the 'seed of Adam') is fully and completely cured from unwholeness and mortality. This restoration will be actualised and revealed to its full extent in the General Resurrection, the resurrection of all, both the righteous and the wicked.[7]

It follows that

> it does not depend upon our will whether we shall rise after death or not, just as it is not by our will that we are born. Christ's death and resurrection brings immortality and incorruption to all in the same manner, because all have the same nature as the Man Christ Jesus.[8]

There is a tension, therefore, which remains to be solved in the doctrine of the humanity of Christ, for the theologian "cannot but maintain the perfection and universality of God's saving work in Jesus Christ and the reality of unending punishment, that is, the seeming failure of salvation."[9] It is, in other words, a Christological way of posing the problem of predestination and free choice.

The problem gains a new dimension with St. Maximus' affirmation that the two wills of Christ are *natural* wills. By asserting this proposition, it appeared to the Monotheletes that St. Maximus was in fact denying Christ's free choice. In the words of the monothelete patriarch Pyrrhus,

> If you say that the will is natural, and if what is natural is compelled, and if you say that the wills in Christ are natural, you in fact take away all His voluntary motion.[10]

St Maximus responds to Pyrrhus' attack with an attack of his own, a devastating *reductio ad absurdum* which exposes the fallacy of Pyrrhus' position by implying a relationship between it and Origenism:

> [If one were to continue in this line of reasoning, that what is natural is compelled, then] God Who is by nature God, by nature

7. Georges Florovsky, "Creation and Redemption," in *The Collected Works of George Florovsky*, Volume Three, *Creation and Redemption*, p. 147.

8. Ibid., p. 148.

9. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor*, p. 209.

10. *DispPyr*, PG 91:293B.

> Good, and by nature Creator must of necessity be [not only] God [but also] Good and Creator. To think, much less to speak, in this manner is the height of blasphemy. For who attributes necessity [to God]?[11]

These statements cannot be pondered too long, for they are perfect and succinct statements of the Origenist Problematic. All the watchwords are there: deity, goodness, creatorhood. For Pyrrhus, St. Maximus' doctrine was a denial of freedom to Christ. As St. Maximus saw it, Pyrrhus' own position was too reminiscent of Origen: for the Confessor to say that the will was natural was not the same thing as making the will a *definition* which compelled the divine essence. In this context, even St. Maximus' last question in the above quotation should perhaps not be taken in too rhetorical a sense, for the Confessor may be trying to get Pyrrhus to recall Origen's name for himself, rather than mentioning it explicitly.

It is the implied relationship with Origen in the Confessor's response to Pyrrhus which makes this passage so significant. This implied relationship indicates that the Confessor is confronted with a many-sided task. At one level, there is the apokatastasis which is the inevitable logical result of the affirmation of a human natural will of Christ: *individual* human wills would appear to be of no significance inasmuch as there is a certain compulsion in human nature which results from Christ having had a human natural will. But at another level, this is but a different way of stating the monothelete principle that what is natural is compelled. And at a third level, as the Confessor himself points out, this conception of the natural will is linked to the Origenist Problematic of God's compulsion to create. Creation, Redemption, and Eschatology thus form a continuum, for at each stage the dilemma with which St. Maximus is confronted is the same: he will have to show that the affirmation that the will is a natural property is in no way a denial of free choice.

As the debate between Pyrrhus and Maximus proceeds, it becomes clear that the means whereby the Confessor will attempt to do this is provided by the crucial distinction between person and nature. The Confessor, having observed that "the gnomic is fitly ascribed to us, being *the mode of the employment of will, and not a principle of nature,* otherwise nature [itself] would change

11. Ibid., 293CD.

innumerable times," goes on to make the astonishing assertion that

> It is thus not possible to say that Christ had a gnomic will. For by virtue of the fact of His existence, that is, of His divine subsistence, he also naturally had an inclination to the good, and a shrinking from evil, just as Basil... said when teaching the interpretation of the forty-fourth Psalm, 'and in this same way you will understand also what is said about Him by Isaiah: "Before the child knows or chooses evil, he will choose the good," thus "before the child knew good and evil, he turned aside from evil and chose the good." ' The word 'before' indicates that He had what is good by nature, not by inquiring and deliberating as we do, but because He subsisted divinely by virtue of His very being.[12]

Pyrrhus is quick to see the implications of this, and there at once ensues a discussion of them:

> **Pyrrhus:** Virtues, then, are natural things?
>
> **Maximus:** Yes, natural things.
>
> **Pyrrhus:** If they are natural things, why, [then], do they not exist in all men equally, since all men have an identical nature?
>
> **Maximus:** But they *do* exist equally in all men because of the identical nature.
>
> **Pyrrhus:** Then why is there such a great inequality [of virtues] in us?
>
> **Maximus:** Because we do not all practise what is natural to us to an equal degree; indeed, if we did practise to an equal degree [those virtues] natural to us, as we were created to do, then one could be able to perceive one virtue in us all just as there is one nature [in us all], and that one virtue would not admit of a "more" or a "less".
>
> **Pyrrhus:** If virtue is something natural [to us, then,] and if what is natural to us exists in us not through asceticism but in virtue of our creation, then why is it that we acquire the virtues, which are natural, with [such] asceticism and labours?
>
> **Maximus:** Asceticism, and the toils that go with it, were devised for those who love virtue simply in order to ward off from the soul the deceit that establishes itself through sensory perception. It is not as if the virtues have been newly introduced from outside, for they inhere in us from creation, as has been said already. Therefore, when deception is completely expelled, the soul immediately exhibits the splendor of [its] natural virtue. For

12. Ibid., 308D-309A. The words ascribed to St. Basil are not to be found in his works; Maximus is probably quoting from memory.

> example: he who is not foolish is intelligent, he who is not cowardly or foolhardy is bold, he who is not intemperate is temperate, and he who is not unrighteous is righteous.... Consequently, with the removal of the things that are contrary to nature only the things proper to nature [remain and] are manifest.[13]

Throughout this crucial passage, Pyrrhus argues from a position which reduces the tension between person and nature, between *tropos* and *logos*, to a mere "naturalism," and conversely, St. Maximus makes plain that distinction: while the virtues are indeed natural things, they do not occur in all men equally because "we do not all practise to an equal degree" what is natural to us. It is thus to the individual human hypostasis and its gnomic will that evil is to be referred, and consequently, its deification as well. Well-being (τὸ ευ ειναι) is in the last analysis dependent upon the individual human person and his gnomic will,[14] for the whole thrust of St. Maximus' argument is precisely upon *personal* askesis.

It is here that a problem occurs. It would appear that the Confessor has ascribed the will not to the nature but to the person. And this, of course, is simply another way of stating the position of the Monotheletes for whom the will was hypostatic. And if that is so, then the apokatastasis is the only result, for Christ, having the will only of His divine hypostasis, will in that case determine human nature and human persons apart from their own wills in an irresistible manner by His resurrection. Conversely, if the will were exclusively natural and not personal, then the same result is inevitably attained.

However, the impasse is completely avoided by St. Maximus, who will not accept any reduction or confusion of the distinction between person and nature. On the basis of the distinction between nature and person, the Confessor can maintain that Christ has a truly human natural will, including all the processes that this implies, and yet does not have the human hypostatic mode of willing, the gnomic will, because His hypostasis is that of the divine and eternal Word.[15] This in turn means both that the doctrine of the will and of the apokatastasis have been profoundly modified. On the one hand, there is indeed a natural will proper to both the divine and the human natures of Christ.

13. Ibid., 309B-312A.

14. cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* II:1:5.

But there is also a *mode of willing* which is uniquely particularized by the individual person; for St. Maximus there is thus no such thing as a "will in general," a will which may be considered in abstraction from its hypostatic mode of employment. This in turn means that the doctrine of the apokatastasis has been reworked

15. In Chapter Five, in the text identified by footnote 65, we noted that "free choice as such, being a property of the nature, is certainly found in Christ's humanity." And in the chart following footnote 101 (same chapter), deliberation, udgment, and those very psychological processes associated with doubt and ignorance are attributed to the human nature. We have seen how Maximus subsequently denied these things to Christ.

We have further observed that the gnomic will is associated with these natural processes of doubt and hesitation. There are thus several problems with the conception of the gnomic will which the Confessor never resolves, and while these problems deal with the broader field of theological anthropology, and therefore are beyond the scope of this essay, a word must nonetheless be said about them here. As udgment, and therefore, doubt, hesitation and ignorance are proper to human nature, does not the denial of a gnomie to Christ therefore entail a denial of these properties of His human nature as well? Can Christ be truly tempted as we are if there is no possibility of hesitation in His human will? And on the eschatological side, does not the fact that human free choice (προαιρεσις) in the saints in the eschaton will not be moved by judgment also imply a type of "eschatological, anthropological Apollinarianism?" In the final analysis, one notes a hesitency on the Confessor's part to apply his own principle of a distinction between "the humanity in Him" and "the humanity in us" consistently. Rather than saying that there is a doubt and hesitation in Christ which is different from ours, he excludes them altogether, thus failing to develop one of his most significant insights. The same could be said of his exclusion of judgment and the related psychological processes of the will in the saints in the eschaton. Is it true that all human discursive reason ceases? All doubt? All hesitation? If it is possible that there are real free choices without any possibility of sinning in the eschaton, surely it is also possible that there can be real hesitations over choices, real periods of "indecision" and of discursive examination. These are complex questions, and they await a fuller exposition.

In regard to the foregoing discussion, one should also note the remarks of J. D. Madden in his article "The Authenticity of Early Definitions of Will (Thelesis)" concerning the separation of the psychology of the will from that of the soul's intellectual processes:

> "It is clear then, that the definitions in Maximus' corpus are fabricated and that there is no developed tradition of thelesis-speculation before Maximus. If we ask who is responsible for this fabrication, the finger of cui bono points to Maximus.... While this may reflect ill on the scholarly ethics of the seventh century, it serves also to emphasize the originality of Maximus' volitional psychology. Concerned to vindicate the freedom of man's will, he was among the first to see clearly that no classical attempt at this had succeeded. All of them had left human purpose the slave of reason, or of passions, or of some conflict between the two. (Cont.)

along more trinitarian lines. There is, for St. Maximus, an apokatastasis of human *nature* to the condition of immortality and Ever-being in the General Resurrection. But this is a determination of the creature's immortality, not of its own *hypostatic state* in that immortality, which may be Ever-*Well*-Being or Ever-*Ill*-Being.[16] While it is true, then, that "The Word of God, and God, wills the mystery of His embodiment to be effected always and in all," and that He "proffers himself wholly, simply, and graciously, by reason of His limitless goodness to all, whether worthy or unworthy," He nonetheless produces the "permanence of everlasting being only as each man of himself has been and is [then] disposed."[17] It is in this manner, to cite the words of Fr. Riou, that the "distinction (of *logos* and *tropos*)... allows St. Maximus to confront the Origenists,"[18] for this distinction allows St. Maximus to distinguish between the human *nature* of Christ and individual human *persons* who are in it.

> One has to distinguish most carefully between the healing of nature and the healing of the will.... All nature, the whole cosmos, will be restituted. But the dead souls will still be insensitive to the very revelation of Light.
>
> The Light Divine will shine to all, but those who have deliberately spent their lives here on earth in fleshly desires, 'against nature,' will be unable to apprehend or enjoy this eternal bliss. The Light is the Word which illumines the natural minds of

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15. (Cont.)
... I add only that his master-stroke was to seize upon the verb root thelo as the basis for his concept. In so doing he leapt back over all classical philosophy to a root whose spontaneous, immediate, para-rational efficacity was well known to Homer as well as to the translators of the LXX, the writers of the New Testament, and the early Fathers of the Church. This root provided solid ground - perhaps the only solid ground in the Greek vocabulary - for a faculty which would stand co-equal to intellect, yet independent of it... Proairesis thus waited for a millennium for the frank identification with spontaneous, para-rational impulse which Maximus finally accorded it in baptizing it thelesis. By this stroke Maximus created what has never before been clearly acknowledged, and what ever since has been known properly as the will." (pp. 78-79, italics mine).

16. *Ambigua 65*, PG 91:1392CD.

17. *Ambigua 42*, PG 91:1329AB, cf. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 171.

18. Riou, *Le Monde*, p. 82f.

> the faithful, but to others it is a burning fire of judgement... St. Maximus admitted an *apokatastasis* in the sense of a restitution of all beings to an integrity of nature, of a universal manifestation of the Divine Life, which will be apprehended by every one.... (But) the wicked will be separated from God by their lack of a resolute purpose of good. *We have here the same duality of nature and will.*[19]

The interrelationships of the distinction between *logos* and *tropos*, the natural and the gnomic wills, and the triads Genesis, Kinesis, Stasis, and Being, Well- or Ill-Being, and Ever-Being may thus be schematized by the following tables:

Genesis

Being (Logos)	Mode of Being (Tropos)
Nature	Hypostasis

Kinesis

	Well- or Ill-Being
(Natural) Will	Mode of the employment of the will
Energy	
Free Choice	Gnomic Will

Stasis

Ever-Being	Ever-Well- or Ill-Being
Apokatastasis of nature, but...	The state that each person enjoys depends upon his gnomic will.

This permits us to see that, insofar as the apokatastasis is a deterministic doctrine which may result from the will being

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19. Florovsky, "Creation and Redemption," pp. 151-152.

affirmed as *either* strictly natural, *or* strictly personal, it is therefore a problem of predestination and free will, which St. Maximus resolves by a strict attention to the preservation of the distinction of person and nature.

For St. Maximus, then, the monothelete principle that what is natural is compelled is not strictly true, for as he himself suggests, it leads right back to the Origenist Problematic and the necessity of creation. Insofar as the principle *is* true, it is true only in the limited sense of an apokatastasis only of nature. Having refuted this, it is no longer necessary to maintain that the will is hypostatic in order for there to be freedom of will. However, there is a certain truth to the second of the monothelete principles, and this Maximus does not deny. In other words, it is by acknowledging both the personal and the natural aspects of the will that St. Maximus is able to avoid a completely deterministic conception of the apokatastasis, and in this balanced attention to the distinction between person and nature, between the natural will and the mode of willing, we are able to see the work of a theologian who refuses to respond to Monotheletism one-sidedly with a bald assertion of two natural wills. The will *is* natural, *but* it, like the nature, has its own hypostatic mode.

But how then does St. Maximus exclude from Christ the principle of non-contradiction, that is, how does he accomplish a non-dialectical conception of Christ's human will? And what, in that case, is the plurality of goods from which St. Maximus envisions Christ's human will as being able to choose? The answers to these questions provide the final blow to any deterministic conception of Christ's humanity, and to them we now turn.

II. The Refutation of Monothelete Principle Three: That Two Wills Imply Two Wills in Moral Opposition

In the early part of the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, Pyrrhus and St. Maximus move almost at once to a short exchange concerning the role of the principle of non-contradiction, or the dialectic of oppositions, in defining the human will of Christ. And

no less immediately does the Confessor rule out such an approach to the human will of Christ:

> **Pyrrhus:** But it is impossible for two wills to coexist with each other in one person with opposition.
>
> **Maximus:** If it is not possible for two wills to coexist in one and the same person without opposition, then by your own reasoning it *is* possible *with* opposition. And if this is possible, then you have confessed the existence of two wills. So you do not differ over the number of wills, but only over the principle of their opposition. So it remains for us to discover the real cause of this conflict [of wills]. What do you say this cause is? The natural will, or sin? If you say that it is the natural will- and since we already know that there is no other cause of this other than God - then you make God the author of the conflict [of wills]. But if the cause is sin and if Christ is free from sin, then the Incarnate God has no opposition of any kind in the wills proper to His natures, since no effect can result from a cause which does not exist.[20]

It is clear from the foregoing that for Pyrrhus, the principle of the plurality of wills - the affirmation of two wills in Christ - was equivalent to the affirmation of opposing wills. But for the Confessor the two principles do not necessarily imply each other at all; the plurality and distinction of the natural wills does not imply their opposition, and for a very interesting reason. St. Maximus implies that the Monotheletes argue against the two wills from an understanding of Christ's humanity which is determined "from below," that is, that their conception of humanity and its will, determined by the fallen state, is the very same understanding of Christ's humanity and its will. But the Confessor makes it clear that he starts from a different place. For him it is the revealed sinlessness of Christ's humanity which is the decisive determining factor for a proper understanding of humanity, and therefore of its will. The Confessor's anthropology is an anthropology "from above." Christ was sinless, and therefore there is no necessary opposition of the human will to the divine will. Once again, the Confessor's eschatological understanding of the will accords closely with his conception of the human will of Christ.

This does not exhaust the discussion of the principle of opposition. Towards the very end of the *Disputation* this subject again arises in a more abstract manner which directly recalls the Origenist Problematic:

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20. *DispPyr*, PG 91:292AB.

> **Pyrrhus:** But we do not say "one energy" in order to deny the human operation. It is said to be passible in contrast to the divine energy.
>
> **Maximus:** Then by the same principle those who say "one nature" do not say this as a denial of the human nature, but because this [human] nature is distinguished from the divine, for this reason it is also said to be passible.
>
> **Pyrrhus:** How so? Did not the fathers define human movement as passibility, in contrast to the divine energy?
>
> **Maximus:** God forbid! For, to speak generally, no existent thing is known or defined through comparison with its opposite. Otherwise, [the two] things will be found to cause each other reciprocally. For if, because divine movement is an energy, human movement is passible then certainly it follows that because divine nature is good, human nature is therefore evil. And the exact opposite may likewise be said: that because human movement is termed passible, for this reason divine movement is termed energy, and that because human nature is evil, the divine nature is for this reason good. But enough of this! For such [thoughts] are altogether perverse.[21]

In the words of Pierre Piret, to allow the dialectic of oppositions to define things

> circumscribes beings in a fundamental opposition, between the limits of good and evil; the implied corollary of such a contradistinction between the divine ενέργεια and human πάθος is that the human nature is evil because the divine nature is good. And such opposition can be immediately reversed and counterposed: the divine nature is good because the human nature is evil, and this human nature thus determines, in its wickedness, the goodness of the divine nature.[22]

And this is to return to the predicament of Plotinus and the problematic of Origen which we examined chapter two: as God is absolute simplicity, incorporeal, Good, Father and Creator, so there must always be a composite, material, and evil creation standing over against Him precisely in order that He may be all those things. It is therefore the dialectic of oppositions which, in finding its way into the monothelete controversy, provides the essential link between the three moments of doctrine - Creation, Redemption and Eschatology - and therefore its refutation in the one will require its refutation in the others.

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21. Ibid., 349CD.

22. Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur*, pp. 356-357.

The basic task remains what it always was: to disentangle the principle of plurality from that of opposition, but in the case of Monotheletism, it assumes a double aspect. On the one hand, St. Maximus must show that there is no opposition of the two wills in Christ, reinterpreting what took place at Gethsemane. On the other hand, once he has established that there is a genuine human will of Christ which is not in opposition to the divine, he must go on to show how *that* will is not dialectically conditioned by showing what the "goods" are that it is confronted with at Gethsemane. The way in which the Confessor does this is difficult and complex, and requires us to trace his logic through step by step.

We are led almost immediately back to the fundamental distinction of person and nature. Pyrrhus asks a very illuminating question of St. Maximus: "was not the flesh moved by the decision of the Word Who is united with it?"[23] This might at first glance be taken as a subtle affirmation of the dyothelete position and therefore as a contradiction within Monotheletism. But upon closer inspection it is not. For Pyrrhus the essential goal was to preserve Christ's voluntary motion; therefore, the will was not natural because what is natural is compelled. The will is therefore hypostatic and free. In turn, Christ's humanity has no will. But even more intriguing is St. Maximus' response to the question, for he seems to avoid any direct answer entirely. He remains content simply to make allusions to the earlier heresy of Nestorianism and then to launch into an excursus on nature and its natural properties:

> **Maximus:** You divide Christ by talking like this! For [in that case] Moses and David, and as many as were susceptible to the influence of the divine energies, were moved by His command and laid aside human and fleshly properties. But we say, following all the holy fathers in this as in all things, that, since the God of All Himself became man without [undergoing any] change, then [it follows] that the same Person not only willed in a manner appropriate to His Godhead, but also willed as man in a manner appropriate to His humanity. For the things that exist came to be out of nothing, and have therefore a power that draws them to hold fast to being, and not to non-being; and the natural characteristic of this power is an inclination to that which maintains them in being, and a drawing back from things destructive [to them]. Thus the super-essential Word, existing essentially in a human manner, also had in His humanity this self-preserving power that clings to

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23. *DispPyr* PG 91:297A.

existence. And He [in fact] showed both [aspects of this power], willing the inclination and the drawing back through His human energy. He displayed the inclination to cling to existence in His use of natural and innocent things, to such an extent that unbelievers thought He was not God; and He displayed the drawing back at the time of the Passion when He voluntarily balked at death. Wherein, then, has the Church of God done anything absurd if She confesses that along with His human and created nature, there also existed in Him, without diminution, the principles inserted creatively in that nature by Him, without which that nature could not exist?[24]

But it is in fact the allusion to Nestorianism that provides the key to the decipherment of this passage. If it was true that Pyrrhus' remarks disclosed a "revival of the heresy of Apollinarius" because Christ's manhood appears in them as "a mere *organon*, an instrument or tool without real power of free choice - a puppet show of passive attributes, worked *from outside* by the divinity of the Word,"[25] then it was equally true that the humanity is somehow detached from the Word precisely since it was worked *from outside*.[26] This Division in Christ was the result of the whole monothelete dilemma.

Christ's prayer in Gethsemane - "If it be possible let this cup pass from me" - was attributed by the Monotheletes to that opposing human will. His subsequent petition - "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" - was the denial and overriding of the human will by the divine will. Thus the one Person of Christ was willing two entirely contradictory and opposing things at the same time, and this, to Maximus, was to "divide Christ." It would therefore have to be concluded that St. Maximus is not in disagreement with the Monotheletes over the principle of excluding opposition in Christ. He is rather in disagreement over what such exclusion means. It is in his reinterpretation of the prayer at Gethsemane that one discovers how St. Maximus had applied the principles both of the distinction of *logos* and *tropos* and that of the plurality of the objects of choice.

Having already stated the general principle that created nature has a God-given and innate power which clings to

24. Ibid., 297B-300A.

25. K. T. Ware, "Christian Theology in the East 600-1453," in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 188.

26. Ibid., cf. Piret, *Le Christ*, p. 285, and *TheoPol 15*, PG 91:173AB.

existence, the Confessor is asked by Pyrrhus to clarify what this principle means, and notably, his question is posed in language that would entangle St. Maximus to a rather "Augustinian" conception of original sin:

Pyrrhus: If fear is attributed to us by nature and if this is a thing worthy of reproof, then in your view things that are worthy of reproof, in other words, sin, exist in us by nature.

Maximus: Again you reason erroneously from an equivocation. Fear is both proper to nature and contrary to nature. Fear is proper to nature when it is a force that clings to existence by drawing back [from what is harmful to existence]. But it is contrary to nature when it is an irrational dread. Therefore the Lord did not have that type of fear which is contrary to nature.... Rather, He received as good, that which is proper to nature and which expresses the power inherent in our nature which holds fast to being, willing it on our account. These natural things of the will are present in Him, but not in exactly the same way as they are in us. He truly hungered and thirsted, not in the same mode as we do, but in a mode which surpasses us, for He did so voluntarily. Thus He was truly afraid, not as we are but in a mode surpassing us. To put it concisely: all things which are natural in Christ have both the rational principle proper to the [human] nature and also a supernatural mode of existence, so that both the [human] nature is disclosed by means of its rational principle, and the economy by means of its super-natural mode of existence.[27]

The fear of death which Christ experienced at Gethsemane is, in other words, not so much the opposition of the human will to the divine as the human will actively willing what is natural to it, and therefore *what is good*.

In order to appreciate more fully the significance of St. Maximus' remarks, one must turn to the *Fourth Opuscule*, for it is there, according to Léthel, "that we discover Maximus' first standpoint against Monotheletism."[28] For St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Christ's Passion posed a dilemma, precisely that of the apparent opposition of His human will to the divine will. It is this opposition which the Confessor addresses in the *Fourth Opuscule* from the perspective of the distinction between that humanity which is "in Christ" and that which is "in us", a distinction we have seen already in the quotation above.

27. *DispPyr* PG 91:297CD.

28. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 65.

> I hold that according to nature the humanity of the Saviour is no different from our own, but it is the same in essence without any differences, because He took it from our nature by the ineffable assumption from the undefiled virginal blood of the Most Holy Mother of God. United to this blood, as to a seed, the Word became flesh, without ceasing to be God by essence. He was thus made perfect man, sin only excepted. We, [however], often rebel against and oppose God by means of the faculty of will, which in our case inclines both to the one side and to the other; but He, being by nature free from all sin, as being not a mere man but enhominized God, has nothing in him that opposes God. He has rather preserved our nature undefiled and completely pure. It is as He Himself said: 'Now the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me;' (John 14:30), that is to say, nothing of the things whereby we demonstrate the opposition of [our] will [to God], thus distorting our own nature. Because of this opposition that is in us, it is said that Christ Himself was made disobedient (Gregory Nazianzus, *4th Theological Oration* 5) in order that He might set us free from this disobedience by the power of [His] enhominization. To confirm the truth of this enhominization, He became, and voluntarily did, all things for our sake, not repudiating our essence or any of the natural and innocent things that belong to it. Rather, He deified it with all its characteristics, entirely permeating it through the union and becoming one with (περιχωρήσας) it without confusion by means of the one unique hypostasis, rendering it totally capable of acting in a divine way, just as iron is permeated by fire.
>
> Therefore, the humanity that is proper to Him differs from that which is ours, not in the rational principle of its nature, but in the new mode of its genesis. For it is the same as ours by essence but it is not the same in [its] seedless generation. It is [thus] not the nature of a mere [man], but the human nature of [God the Word Who was] truly enhominized for our sake. In the same way, His [human] will was a genuinely natural will just like ours. But it was moulded in a divine manner which transcends us.[29]

The center of the argument, according to Léthel, is to demonstrate that the opposition in humanity is exactly that of the will, and not that of the nature. "Thus, between the humanity in Christ and the humanity in us, there cannot be a difference of nature. The difference, which consists in the opposition of the will which is in us and which is not in Him, is not of the order of nature."[30] And this distinction is in turn based upon that between the *logos* of humanity and its particular *tropos* of personal existence, being either that humanity which is "in Him" or that which is "in us."

29. *TheoPol* 4, PG 91:57D-60D.
30. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 67.

And the key to this distinction between Christ's humanity and our own is precisely the virgin birth. It is Christ's "seedless generation" which "admirably manifests the identity of *logos* and the difference of *tropos* between Christ (in His humanity) and us."[31] It is this distinction between *logos* and *tropos* which is the key to the passage, and it is on its basis that the Confessor is able

> *to separate the notions of distinction and contradiction confounded by Gregory (of Nazianzus) and by Sergius.* In relation to the divine will, the distinctiveness of the human will is a necessary result of its natural *logos*, where as its opposition is that of a personal *tropos* which 'modifies' it in the case of the sinner. It is thus perfectly possible to affirm that Christ has a human will other than the divine will without it following that it is contrary to it.[32]

The Confessor's method throughout this, and other, polemical passages is therefore the reverse of that of the Monotheletes. "Whereas Sergius concentrates his attention upon one central event of Christ's life, Maximus remains always within the framework of a theoretical reflection on the hypostasis and natures of Christ."[33] His perspective, in other words, is that of the whole dispensation of the Incarnation.

However, to have applied the distinction between *logos* and *tropos* so consistently and on its basis to have disentangled the dialectic of oppositions from the principle of plurality, is still not enough. Maximus must also

> respond to the problem posed by Sergius.... It will be necessary for him to reinterpret the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane by making it clear that the human will effected the Passion. As long as this reinterpretation is not effected, Maximus can only see in Christ's words the refusal of the Passion. This refusal he evidently cannot set on the moral plane, for in that case, he would necessarily be led to the same denial as was Sergius.[34]

It is for this task that the conception of the innate power of nature, which clings to being and to the plurality of those things which maintain it in existence, is designed. Its application in the anti-monothelete argument of the Confessor is found in the *Sixth Opuscule*. St. Maximus comes directly to the point and addresses

31. Ibid., p. 69.
32. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
33. Ibid., p. 73.
34. Ibid., pp. 73-74.

the question of the reinterpretation of Gethsemane from the perspective of this innate power of nature.

> [So then,] what do you suppose is the meaning of that prayer, 'nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt?' In other words, what do you suppose it indicates? Dread, or courage? The highest agreement [of His human will with the divine will] or [its] utmost separation [from it]?[35]

The Confessor goes on to answer his own question in terms of the conception of the innate power of created human nature to cling to existence and shun things which cause death, a conception already elaborated in the *Fourth Opuscule*:

> Clearly the refusal which is [evident] here, that is to say, the sentence 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,' excludes all opposition, and demonstrates the union of the [human] will of the Saviour with the divine will of the Father, since the whole Word has united Himself essentially to the entirety of [human] nature, and has deified it in its entirety by uniting Himself essentially to it.[36]

In the context of the question which Maximus poses at the beginning of this Opuscule, and the background of the conception elaborated in the *Fourth Opuscule*, he can go on to conclude the very opposite of what the Monotheletes were maintaining:

> Since He had become what we are for our sakes, He spoke [these words], *in manner condign to His humanity*, to God the Father; 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,' because He, Who was by nature God, had as man a *faculty of will wholly in accord with the Father's will.* Wherefore, according to both [the natures] from which, in which and of which His hypostasis was constituted, He was made known as desiring and effecting our salvation: *on the one side, as consenting to it with the Father and the Spirit; on the other side, [the human], as 'becoming obedient unto death,' to the Father, 'even the death of the Cross,' Himself bringing to pass the great Mystery of the Economy towards us by means of the flesh.*[37]

The Confessor's argument here is quite subtle. There is an "absolutely essential" relationship between Christ's refusal of the Cup, which the Confessor clearly sees as a natural human operation, and its ultimate acceptance.

35. *TheoPol 6*, PG:65B.
36. Ibid., 68C.
37. Ibid., 68CD-D.

> If the acceptance had not been immediately preceded by the refusal, then it would not be possible to prove, as Maximus has just done, that this acceptance is the expression of the *human* will.... Maximus considers that the refusal truly emanates from the human will of Christ, but the moral problem posed by the Monotheletes is resolved, for the opposition is immediately excluded by the following act of the human will... (emphasis mine).[38]

The acceptance of the Cup is, therefore, not an act of the divine will as it were brutally suppressing the human will; rather it is the "free act *par excellence* of Christ's human will,"[39] and it is this fact, that "our salvation has been humanly willed by a divine person," which constitutes "the great Christological discovery of St. Maximus the Confessor."[40]

But it is in the context of this fact, that Christ seems at one time not to will something, and later seems to will it, that Pyrrhus asks a very difficult question:

> **Pyrrhus:** If in our wills we differ from ourselves or from each other, and now will something and now do not will it, then in regard to our nature and the rational principle characteristic of it, not only will we be of a different nature than other men, for we often differ with their wills but we will change our own nature any number of times as well.[41]

In other words, St. Maximus may have succeeded in eliminating oppositions between the divine and the human natures of Christ, but has he truly eliminated oppositions within Christ's human nature itself? Maximus responds by again pointing out the distinction between *logos* and *tropos*:

> **Maximus:** To will and to will in a particular manner are not the same, just as the power of sight and the specific exercise of perception are not the same. Will, just like sight, is of nature and exists in all things that belong to the same class and have an identical nature. But to will in a particular manner, as likewise to see in a particular manner - in other words, to will to walk, or, to will not to walk, and the look to the right hand or to the left, or up or down, or to look towards concupiscence or towards the rational principles in beings - all this is a mode of the use of the will and perception. It exists only in the person exercising the will or the

38. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 96.
39. Ibid., p. 98.
40. Ibid., p. 17.
41. *DispPyr* 292D.

> perception, and so distinguishes him from others. Thus it is clear that we have by nature the will to eat or not to eat, to walk or not to walk. But these alternatives are not applicable to the will as such, but only to the particular mode of willing. In other words, things come to pass or do not come to pass by choices.[42]

It is the natural will which presents these alternative plural objects of choice. Because they *are* presented by the natural will, they are goods. The negations in this passage - to will to do such and such or to will not to do such and such - should therefore not be taken as oppositions, but simply as alternative good objects of choice.[43] It is the person which chooses between these alternatives.

This provides the key for the proper understanding of the *Sixth Opuscule* and the Confessor's reinterpretation of Gethsemane. *It is the human natural will of Christ which presents the alternative not to accept the cup of the Passion. This is one object of choice. It is likewise the human natural will which wishes salvation. This is the other object of choice. It is the person of the Word Who gives the human will this unique tropos. Christ's prayer is thus not opposed to God,* but to *death.*[44] Nor do Christ's words indicate an opposition within the human will itself. They indicate simply two alternatives, certainly alternatives of very different sorts, but alternatives nonetheless.

III. The Decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council

We are now in a position to see that the decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 681 were more than decisions in favour of the dyothelete dogma, for underlying them lay the complex and subtle metaphysical distinctions of the Confessor.

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42. Ibid., 292D-293B.

43. St. Augustine records that this same language - expressing alternatives by negations - is used by Pelagius. " 'Take,' says he (Pelagius), 'for instance, my ability to speak. That I am able to speak is not my own; but that I do speak is my own, - that is, of my own will. And because the act of speaking is my own, I have the power of alternative action, - that is to say, both to speak and power of alternative action, - that is to say, both to speak and to refrain from speaking.' " (*On Nature and Grace* 53, p. 139, NPNF.)

44. Piret, *Le Christ*, p. 277.

Because the human will of Christ has truly, effectively, and *voluntarily* willed our salvation in the Passion it can be reasonably said of the Council that, in the words of Léthel, its decisions were in reality the dogmatization more of "the second will of Christ, the human will. Even more precisely again... one should speak of the *dogma of the human liberty of Christ.*"[45] And as the focus of the debate had not been upon the general metaphysics of the Incarnation alone, but upon those metaphysical distinctions as applied to one particular event of the Economy, one may also draw the conclusion that

> the perspective of Chalcedon was principally ontological, according to a 'vertical axis,' but it remained open to the historical perspective. The perspective of (the Lateran Council of) 649 is principally historical, according to the 'horizontal axis,' but it presupposes, and perfectly integrates, the attainment of Chalcedon.[46]

These words, which Léthel writes of the Lateran Council held in Rome under the presidency of Pope St. Martin and at which the Confessor played a significant role, could, and must, be equally applied to the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

But the Council holds many more implications than even these. As we have seen, there are many related problems implied by the seventh-century Christological debates. As there is a certain apokatastasis of human nature, brought about by the humanity of Christ in His Passion and Resurrection, and yet a full freedom of choice to accept that resurrection by one's own personal gnomic mode of willing (a mode of willing excluded in Christ because it is that mode of willing proper to the created human hypostasis), the Sixth Ecumenical Council may also be reasonably said to be a dogma of a certain way of looking at the problem of predestination and free will. It may be reasonably held to be the dogma both of the personal and of the natural aspects of the will, even though it makes no explicit mention of St. Maximus' concept of the gnomic will. It can be reasonably held to be the dogma *par excellence* of a non-dialectical understanding of free choice.

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45. Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p. 109.

46. Ibid., p. 112.

Chapter 8

Conclusions And Implications: A Precis of St. Maximus' Doctrine of Free Choice

...Distinction is opposition.

Plotinus, Enneads III:2:16

Cardinal Bellarmino's (1542-1621) treatise De assensione mentis in Deum per scalas creaturarum... shows plainly the usual incongruity between the importance given to the principle of plenitude in the doctrine of the attributes of deity and the exclusion of it from the theory of the chief good of man.

Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being[1]

It was not only in Saint Hildegar's visions but in many others that hell's vivid chambers of horrors became so much more interesting than the bland delights of heaven.

Daniel J. Boorstin, The Discoverers[2]

In St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice there are two essential thrusts, the eschatological and the christological. His refutation of Monotheletism therefore necessitates a refutation of "eschatological Monotheletism," or the doctrine that there is one will of God and the saints in eternity. In order to refute this proposition, he maintains the free choice of the saints in the eschaton. Yet if he is to avoid the problem of the Origenist conception of recurrent falls after the General Resurrection, he

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1. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 91.

2. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know is World and Himself* (New York: Vintage Paperbacks, 1985), p. 91.

must and does maintain a doctrine of free choice such as to allow real free choices in eternity and yet without the possibility of the saints' sinning, a task that is intimately related to the task of maintaining that Christ's human will was free, and the Passion freely willed, without there being any possibility of sinning on Christ's part. As Christ's humanity is normative for the eschaton, St. Maximus stands the monothelete anthropology "from below" on its head and does an anthropology "from above", deriving a new conception of free choice from this inversion. This doctrine of free choice involves three aspects, each fully necessary and complementary to the other if such a doctrine of free choice - that there are real free choices in eternity yet no possibility of sinning - is to be maintained. These aspects are:

I. the *objective or ontological* aspect, which answers the questions "What objects are there for the saints to choose amongst, and what are the properties of those objects?",

II. the *relational or motional* aspect, which answers the question "What type of *motion* is involved in the movement to those objects?", and

III. the *psychological or personal* aspect, which answers the question "What is the effect of 1 and 2 upon the creature's psychological processes of willing?"

I. The Ontological Aspect: The Objects of Free Choice in the Eschaton and Their Properties

A. In contradistinction to Plotinus and Origen, there is no ontological identity and mutual equivalence of the categories of Essence, Will, and Energy. Rather, St. Maximus distinguishes three categories. These are Person, Energy, and Essence. These categories are not mere conventions of speech for St. Maximus, but rather correspond to distinct metaphysical realities. They are not therefore each names for the same, absolutely simple "Something." Thus, while God is simple, this simplicity is not to be understood along the lines of the definitional model of simplicity, where the term functions as a great metaphysical "equals" (=) sign. There is

in God a real plurality, different *kinds* of eternity and infinity. In particular, the One Logos is many *logoi*, and these *logoi* are in fact divine energies, each eternal, each infinite, each fully and equally good and divine, each distinct from any other, and yet each in no way divided or separated from each other. Logically speaking, this is an extension of the principle of Cyrillic Chalcedonianism, where the christological terms of the Chalcedonian definition may be used in confessions of triadology, and *vice-versa*. Thus, while the adjectives "unconfused" and "unseparated" were originally used of the relations between deity and humanity in Christ, they may also be used to describe the relationship of the *logoi*, or divine energies, both to each other and to the One *Logos*.[3] With such distinctions between the essence of God and its energies, as well as the distinctions between the energies themselves, there is a resulting plurality of real, yet not opposed, Goods in God. God is consequently left free to create or not to create, for the Neoplatonic and Origenist Problematics and the identification of Essence and Activity, of diversity and opposition, that they embody are completely avoided.

B. This consideration leads inevitably to the crucial interpretive problem involved in any study of St. Maximus. Is the Confessor to be seen as the precursor of Thomas Aquinas, or of Gregory Palamas? It is therefore necessary to say something at this point about this subject, taking Fr. Juan Miguel Garrigues' article "L'énergie divin et la grace chez Maxime le Confesseur" in *Istina* 19 (1974) as the point of departure for our remarks, for the current study bears some relationship to the conclusions that Fr. Garrigues there presents.

In the main, this article must be seen less as an attack on Palamism and more as a subtle attempt to portray the Confessor as an incipient Thomist. In the opening remarks of the article, Fr. Garrigues endeavors to place the Palamite interpretation of the decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical

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3. St. Maximus, *TheoPol 1*, PG 91:20B; *Ambigua 7*, PG 91: 1069B, cf. 1077C-1081C; *Ambigua 22*, PG 91;1257AB; *Gnostic Centuries*, PG 90;1100D, 1101B, 1096D; Alain Riou, *Le Monde et L'Eglise*, p. 59; Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, pp. 138-139, 140-143.

Council in a bad light by somewhat confusing terminological acrobatics regarding the words "has" and "is":

> The Sixth Ecumenical Council has quite thoroughly confessed that the divine nature and the human nature *have* the energies which are their own properties. But it is nowhere insinuated that the energy which the divine nature *has* might be really or formally distinct from the essence which it *is*.[4]

Thus far, Fr. Garrigues' remarks are true and logical enough. It is, however, when he presses his case on "having" and "being" that he runs into trouble, for too much is proved by such an approach:

> If, on the contrary, the energy is the energy proper to its essential form, whatever is said of the energy formally characterizes the essence of which it is the energy.... The divine essence does not *have* an energy, it is *energetic*, that is to say, that it actualizes all the virtualities of its being.[5]

This is because "Maximus views the energy as a power of essential existence."[6] Consequently

> the essence is not able to *have* any other proper attributes or energies other than those which it *is*. For the energy ontologically presupposes the essence in which it inheres.[7]

But even though the argument thus far has been reasonable enough, it is precisely at this point that it begins to break down:

> In God the essence does not support the trinity of persons. They have the divine essence. Because they enhypostatize the essence, they are God, but, as persons, they are not implied that the divine essence as it implies its own natural energy.... *In effect, only a person of the Trinity is able to have, in addition to His own divine being and operation, a human being and operation. The essence is operative, the persons have the operations.*[8]

4. Garrigues, "L'énergie", p. 272, author's emphasis.

5. Ibid., author's emphasis.

6. Ibid., p. 273, citing *TheoPol 16*, PG 91:205B and *I Ambig* 2, PG 91:1037C.

7. Ibid., author's emphasis, citing *TheoPol I*, PG 91:33B, p. 273.

8. Ibid. The underlined portions are the author's emphasis, the italicized portions my own.

The argument seems powerful, but, unfortunately, it simply does not fit St. Maximus, who evidently does not observe such rigid rules concerning "having" and "being," for he can write "the One *Logos is* many *logoi*, and the many *logoi* are one (πολλοὶ λόγοι ὁ εἷς Λόγος ἐστί, καὶ εἷς οἱ πολλοί)."[9] These *logoi* are also energies,[10] which Fr. Garrigues would view more in the sense of attributes, or alternative names of God; God *has* what He *is* and *is* what He *has*. But one could, on Fr. Garrigues' approach, maintain that the One *logos* is no different than the Wisdom, Justice, and Omnipotence which it has. Since St. Maximus quite clearly uses the verb "is" to describe the relationship between the *Logos* and its *logoi*, Fr. Garrigues' argument leads to one of two conclusions: either the *logoi* are many enhypostasizations of the One *Logos*, or the One *Logos* is itself, by an attribute, being composed of many other attributes. Are the *logoi* persons? Or is the *Logos* an attribute?

Fr. Garrigues' next argument is crafted with much more care. The whole thrust, and thereby the whole problem, of Palamism is, according to Fr. Garrigues, not in the affirmation that the divine energies are confessed to be *uncreated*, but that they are in fact said to be *in a real manner ontologically distinct from the divine essence*, and he even calls in Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople (806-815) as support for the opposing view:

> In presenting itself in the line of the council of 680, the Palamite council of 1351... had reason to wish to say that the fathers of the 6th Ecumenical Council have affirmed that the uncreated divine essence implies an uncreated energy in Christ. *It is wrong, however, to claim from the Palamite council that it thought that the 6th Council wished to confess a real or formal distinction between the divine essence and its energies*, whereas its whole argument against the *theandric energy* of Monenergism rests on the contrary postulate.... Nikephoros of Constantinople repeats the argument of St. Maximus and the 6th Council which declared that the energy is inherent to the nature: 'There is neither essence without energy nor energy without essence' (PG 100:304D). Then, making explicit the postulate which subtends christological dyoenergism, he

9. *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1081C.

10. *Ambigua 22*, PG 91:1257AB, cf. Riou, *Le Monde*, pp. 59-60.

> recalls that, in God, the energy is only able to be distinguished from the essence by reason of its created effects....' It is orthodox to regard the divine energy as eternal, or, to speak more correctly, to regard the energy of God Himself (αὐτενέργεια) *on account of the impossibility of distinguishing the energy from the essence*, for they fall under the same essential principle on account of the property of the simple and incorruptible nature from which they proceed....'[11]

This leads Fr. Garrigues to the suggestion that Palamas himself desired less to confess a real distinction between essence and energies and more to preserve one of the most fundamental tenets of the Christian faith, that man may participate in God's divine life.[12] Nevertheless, this real distinction between God's essence and His energies is, Fr. Garrigues maintains, a "sort of eternal emanation of grace logically anterior and independent" of Christ's acts as Creator and Redeemer,[13] for such a distinction is "a reduction of the idea of participation to *entitative participation*," a distinctly "neoplatonic conception" which "ignores two other modes of participation: participation in the causality of the act of being and intentional participation proper to spiritual beings."[14] Thus we arrive at the real center and root of Fr. Garrigues' difficulties with Palamism: its alleged Neoplatonism.

Palamas' mistake is, according to Fr. Garrigues, that he has no conception of God's essence as "pure aseity." That is to say,

> In the manner of the Neoplatonic One, the divine essence is not situated originally in the simplicity of Being in Its pure act, but in that which is Beyond-Being, separated and radically imparticipable.[15]

Consequently, in order to safeguard the doctrine of a real communion between God and the World, Palamas "has to posit a *real distinction* between the divine essence and its

11. Garrigues, "L'énergie", p. 273, Fr. Garrigues' emphasis.
12. Ibid., pp. 274-275.
13. Ibid., p. 275.
14. Ibid., pp. 275-276, Fr. Garrigues' emphasis.
15. Ibid., p. 275.

uncreated acts in which creatures participate."[16] And here, very suggestively, Fr. Garrigues brings in the name of Eunomios:

> The god of Eunomios is the infinitely unique monad, radically separate in his essence, and does not admit of any participation in his being....[17]

The Son cannot, therefore, along Eunomios' model, be fully God by essence, but only by participation in God's energies.

> And viola! For the first time, with the determination of the essence as pure aseity, the distinction between imparticipatable essence and participatable energies is posited.[18]

According to Fr. Garrigues, then, Palamas, being unable to see God's essence in terms of a "pure aseity" where simple being exists in its pure act, not only "having" that pure act but "being" it as well,[19] must go on to posit some formal distinction between essence and energies. And this, "notwithstanding all precautions, necessarily implies distinction and composition in God."[20] And this in turn leads to the hub of Fr. Garrigues' concern over Palamism, for this distinction "*ruins the simplicity of His essence.*"[21]

These points are crucial, for, as Chapter Two of this essay has demonstrated, while Plotinus certainly *wished* to affirm the One's absolute transcendence, his somewhat "definitional" model of simplicity led to precisely that identification of being and activity that Fr. Garrigues would have us embrace, and this identification led in turn to the Origenist Problematic, whose solution was to affirm the precise distinction he would have us deny.

The implications of this particular aspect of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice are immense, for the Confessor's doctrine is *simply not conceivable, possible, or*

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 277.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 275.
20. Ibid., p. 279.
21. Ibid., p. 280, emphasis mine.

compatible, with the doctrine of simplicity that Fr. Garrigues is advocating. Lars Thunberg is even more to the point:

> The logos is, as we have underlined, Himself and many *logoi*, but then the *logoi* may be said to be the one and only Logos, although *what we know of them and their variety does not exhaust what is contained in the Logos. There is no complete identity. As differentiated, the logoi never cease to be different from one another.... The logoi are thus not identical with the essence of God, nor with the empirical forms of existence of the things of the created world.*[22]

C. In contradistinction to Plotinus, where the category of things "around God" or "around the One" serves to distinguish the second and third hypostases from the One, where the latter is stable and immutable and the former move "around" it, and in contradiction to Origen where this preposition denotes a category of preexistent souls which are "around" God, in Maximus it serves to signify those energies which are in and "around" a nature. Here "around" serves to designate the fact that the energies "around" an essence are of an infinite "extension" and therefore do not exhaustively define the contents of their essence, and thus are not metaphysically identical with that essence.[23]

D. In a lengthy footnote (note 49) at the bottom of page 95 of his classic study of St. Maximus, Polycarp Sherwood had this to say about this category of things "around" God:

> I would not only ask, have we here a distinction so developed that it might serve as a later ground for the doctrine of uncreated energies?[24]

The answer to this question in the light of the current study must be an unequivocal "yes." In this regard, the manner of translating περι is of some importance and is indicative of a translator's biases. Sherwood himself should perhaps have been a little more literal in his translation of περι, for he

22. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, p. 139, emphasis mine.

23. *TheoPol 16*, PG 91:209A, *TheoPol 17*, PG 91:212D; *TheoPol 23*, PG 91:261AB; *Ambigua 15*, PG 91:1220D.

24. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism*, p. 95, note 49.

hesitates to give it its full force in English as "around" and prefers the more enervated "about."

Such a class or category of things is, as we have seen, evident already in Plotinus, and persists into St. Gregory of Nazianzus, who can speak of "things around Him" (τὰ περι αυτόν) from which we may infer "the things proper to Him" (τὰ κατ' αὐτόν).[25] Not surprisingly, Fr. Garrigues unhesitatingly translates περὶ αὐτόν not as "around," a translation that he suggests is "trifling,"[26] but as "concerning the subject of God." This seems unjustified, for if the fathers are often alleged to be, at least in terminology if not in intent and content, Neoplatonists, then it would seem more reasonable to give the preposition περι the full sense that it has in Neoplatonism as "around."

II. The Relational or Motional Aspect: Eschatological Creaturely Motion and Free Choice

A. It is *to* this category of things "around" God that creaturely motion and choice is directed, and it is *in* this category that the creature moves "around" God. St. Maximus can speak of free choice moving "around" the object of its attentions and makes quite clear that the divine and uncreated energies are precisely the objects towards which its motion and choice are directed in the eschaton.

B. The creature's motion in the eschaton is described as an "evermoving rest" where all "alternative motion" ceases;

1. The creature must *ever* move because
   a. it *is* a creature and has motion as an inherent part of its creaturely, mutable existence; and because
   b. the objects "around" God in which it moves are each Infinite.
2. The creature must ever *move* because

25. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fourth Theological Oration* (Oration 30): 17, PG 31:125BC: Ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν σκιαγραφοῦντες τὰ κατ' αὐτόν.

26. Garrigues, "L'énergie", p. 281.

a. motion is an inherent part of its creaturely existence, is, in Maximian terms, its own proper energy without which its essence does not exist; and because

b. God, the object of its desire, is infinite; and because

c. there are real and distinct objects - each equally good and therefore in no wise opposed to each other - from which to choose and in which it may move.

3. *Alternative* motion, the motion implied by oppositions, ceases, and in this the creature attains rest in God. Rest should perhaps be here construed as a certainty of the infallible goodness of each of its motions and choices which result from there being not only a real plurality of objects of choice but from the equal goodness of these objects. Rest is a fixity in the good, for there are nothing but goods to choose. It cannot be emphasized too strongly, however, that there are real choices because the Good is not an absolute simplicity as in the definitional model of Neoplatonism. The Good is also a real plurality; there are ultimate Goods.[27]

4. Thus, to use an Aristotelean terminology in this regard, a terminology that St. Maximus, to my knowledge, does not actually use, the creature's ever-moving rest corresponds in an inverse way to God as the Unmoved Mover.

Points 2 c, 3, and 4 above lead to the following consequences:

C. By attaching free choice in the eschaton to the plurality of divine energies, each being equally good and not opposed, St. Maximus has succeeded in detaching the principle of *ontological plurality* from that of *dialectical and moral opposition*. This the Confessor does by distinguishing between the *logos* of the will from its *tropos*, to which latter category opposition, in the case of the human created hypostasis, may accrue. It is therefore "possible to affirm that Christ has a human will other than the divine will

27. *Thal*, PG 90:757D-760C: *Gnostic Centuries*, PG 90:1100D; *Commentary on the Our Father*, PG 90:893CD; *Mystagogy*, PG 91:677A; cf, Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 112.

without it following that it is contrary" or opposed to the divine will.[28] In other words, it is by an application of the distinction of person and nature, a distinction first developed in a trinitarian context by the Cappadocian fathers, and a distinction which is in direct conflict with any definitional model of the divine simplicity and its accompanying dialectic of oppositions, that St. Maximus the Confessor is able to disentangle these two principles.[29]

D. It is agreed by both the Monotheletes and the Dyotheletes that there can be no oppositions in Christ, that is, both sides agree about the principle of non-contradiction and its exclusion in Christ. For the Monotheletes, this means the exclusion of the human will; and this in turn means that they have defined the human will dialectically. But for the Dyotheletes, this exclusion of the principle of non-contradiction in Christ implies rather the affirmation of a non-dialectical conception of the human will.

E. Thus for the Monotheletes, free choice is dialectical and therefore must be confined to the historical arena between Genesis and Stasis, that is, it must be assigned to Kinesis. Conversely, for the Origenists, it is not so confined, but because it is still defined dialectically, this necessitates a doctrine of a preexistent fall of creatures and the possibility of an infinite number of Falls after each apokatastasis. But for Maximus, it is the dialectical conception of the will which alone has been excluded in the eschaton, not the will itself. Dialectical oppositions of the will of man to God are confined to the intervening stage between Genesis and Stasis, to the stage of Kinesis.[30]

F. The very fact that the human will and free choice achieve their deified *tropos* in Christ indicated that the will and its processes continue, though in a modified state, in eternity.

28. Léthel, *L'Agonie du Christ*, pp. 70-71.

29. Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem*, p. 147, remarks: "The freedom of choice, ill used in opposing God, moved itself immediately into a dialectic of Oppositions in place of its expanding into sonship." cf. p. 149: "In the genesis and dissipation of creatures, the Fall had established a dialectic of oppositions which is foreign to the design of the creation." cf. Plotinus' *Enneads*, III:2:16.

30. cf. note 13 above.

This is the christological basis for the eschatological free choice of the saints.

G. The separation of the principle of opposition from the principle of distinction in Christ is also the establishment that there are real distinctions in the Good, Christ Himself being the supreme Logos of this conception. Christ, when refusing the Cup, exhibits the natural human motion and resistance against death, a motion which is good. Yet in His divine *tropos* He humanly chooses and wills the cup, also a good, but a different good. Thus at the Passion, Christ's humanity and its will are the supreme example of the principle that free choice is ultimately to be considered in the context of a plurality of goods and not in the context of a dialectical opposition.[31]

H. It is on the basis of the distinction between *tropos* and *logos* - especially as it bears upon the distinction between the natural will and the mode of willing, inclusive of the category of the mode of willing proper to the created, human hypostasis, the gnomic will - that St. Maximus is able to exclude the Origenistic conception of the apokatastasis and restrict its effect to the side of nature and its logos. This observation may be put in the form of a problematic:

1. If the will of Christ is the one will of the divine hypostasis, then human nature is determined passively by that will, and the hypostatic mode of willing of individual human hypostases is of no consequence. All will be resurrected in Christ not only in their human nature but also to a good *tropos* of their wills. At the level of will, therefore, there is a confusion of person and nature in favour of person, that of the Incarnate hypostasis of the Word of God.

2. Conversely, if the wills of Christ are natural *exclusive of any enhypostasization in the Word*, and moreover, if the human will is not further enhypostasized in individual human hypostases, then it still follows that all humans will be resurrected in Christ. That is to say, if the will is viewed as solely and exclusively natural, then the same

31. *TheoPol 6*, PG 91:65b-69; Léthel, *L'Agonie*, p.96; Piret, *Le Christ et La Trinité*, p. 277.

results obtain as in 1 above, that is, the apokatastasis still results.

Thus the general implications are:

3. If the will is exclusively natural, it becomes meaningless and fruitless to speak of human free choice and moral responsibility, much less to acknowledge to the human person a role in cooperating in its salvation. The only wills of any significance are Christ's two natural wills. And it makes no difference to the result whether one stresses either the divine, the human, or both natural wills, for if the object of both wills is to save all men, the full Origenistic sense of the apokatastasis is the only result.

4. On the other hand, the will must also be a property of the nature, and not just of the person. If the will were solely and exclusively personal, and the person is strictly speaking without any analogy to any other thing, and therefore is indeterminate, then one could not come to any meaningful generalizations about either the will of God or the will of man.

Consequently (and to speak even more generally),

5. For there to be any meaningful knowledge or discussion of the will as such, it must be natural and determined to the extent that the natural will moves only towards things which are good, yet capable of choice between distinct goods.

6. However, for there to be any meaningful escape from the predestinarian constrictions of the apokatastasis, there must be in each case a unique enhypostasization of the will in the person, each free to do with the natural will and its objects of choice what he sees fit.

III. The Psychological Aspect

A. Because free choice is confronted with a variety of ontologically distinct Goods amongst which to choose in the eschaton, and because its relation to God is that of a motion in and around Him, within the realm of these eternal and

equally good objects, free choice is no longer moved by "the things in the middle," that is to say, by the intervening psychological processes of the discursive reason, those processes which hesitate before unknown outcomes. This hesitance has been excluded precisely because the moral outcomes are already certain to be good. This does not preclude, and this cannot stressed too strongly, a real election (αἵρεσις) of one object towards which, and in which, one moves before (πρό) another.

B. In this regard, the phrase "things in the middle" (τὰ μέσα) should not be interpreted in any Stoic sense.[32] The meaning is rather that certain psychological processes which intervene between the perception and election of the object of choice are thereby signified. This interpretation corresponds well with the distinction in modern Greek between η μέση which signifies the "mean" or literal "mid-point," and τὸ μέσον which is a metaphorical mid-point, an agent, or simply an intervening thing or category. The "mesa" of Stoic philosophy refers to a "physical" and "moral" neutrality which is the result of the blending of two opposing elements. It should be noted that these two words may be interchanged in modern Greek only outside of technical and scientific contexts. It is quite evident that St. Maximus means by "things in the middle" precisely what is meant by τὸ μέσον in modern Greek, that is, it indicates the intervening stages in the psychological processes of willing, as he himself states when he says that free choice in the eschaton is not moved by any of these "things in the middle", not even he notes, by "judgment."[33]

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32. *TheoPol 1*, PG 91:24B-D; cf. Gauthier, "La psychologie de l'acte humain," pp. 73-74.

33. Ibid., I am indebted to the Rt. Rev. Bishop Chrysostomos of the Monastery of St. Gregory Palamas, Etna, California, for this point.

IV. General Conclusions: The Sixth Ecumenical Council, Philosophical and Theological Implications of St. Maximus' Doctrine and Methodology of Free Choice

A. The Sixth Ecumenical Council is thus far more than the dogmatization of two wills in Christ. It is the confession of the underlying metaphysics of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice that made such a council in 680 possible.

1. It is the dogmatization of the Dynamic of Cyrillic Chalcedonianism, a dynamic which permits the use of christological terminology in a triadological context. It is thus possible to speak of a real distinction not only between the divine essence on the one hand and the divine energies on the other, but also the divine energies amongst themselves. This is a distinction which does not divide or separate in either case. These two distinctions, between the essence and energies, and between the energies themselves, are fundamental distinctions upon which St. Maximus' doctrine of eschatological free choice is based.

2. The Sixth Council is also the confession not so much of the two wills of Christ, but, as Fr. Léthel observes, the confession of the human will of the Saviour.

3. It is therefore the confession of the voluntary nature of the Passion of Our Lord, humanly willed and chosen by the divine person of the Incarnate Word;

4. It is therefore the confession of human free choice in a manner that does not define it in terms of the dialectic of oppositions;

5. It is thus also the confession of the necessary role of the cooperation of the human will in the scheme of salvation.

6. As it is the confession of the human natural will of the Saviour, it is also the confession of a certain

apokatastasis of nature, of an irresistible predestination of humanity to everlasting being, at one and the same time as it is the confession of true human free choice, both at the level of personal liberty to accept or reject that resurrection in one's own personal gnomic mode of willing, and at the level of a plurality of objects amongst which to choose in the eschaton. That is to say, one attains ever-being by reason of the human nature which we share with Christ, and this is a gift of grace. One's state in that grace, Ever-*Ill*- or Ever-*Well*-Being is dependent upon one's exercise of the will here and now.

B. The Sixth Ecumenical Council is thus far more important for the Orthodox than is the Chalcedonian definition,[34] because in its definition are hidden the responses of one of the Eastern Church's most brilliant theologians to the vital issues of divine predestination and human free will. Furthermore, it is important because in it is also hidden the presupposition of a vast theological development, reaching back beyond the Triadology of the Cappadocians to the Arian controversy, to the Origenist Problematic and its underlying neoplatonic foundations. More than any other council, it was called upon to reflect in a systematic way upon the relationships of Triadology, Christology, and the divine and human wills. In a major way it confronts the issue of revelation and reason, of theodicy and the possible use (or rejection) of the philosophical meanings of philosophical terms such as simplicity. If the analysis of this conception, here presented, has been correct, one must conclude that at the Sixth Ecumenical Council the Church gave the lie to the oft-intoned opinion that Eastern Christianity is fundamentally neoplatonic in its attitudes and outlook, an opinion which in some circles approaches the status of an axiom.

C. Monotheletism in this context is "characterized by its incapacity to view the impeccability of Christ other than as a passive determination of the human nature by the divine nature"[35] and thus exemplifies a Christology and anthropology "from below." Conversely, the dyothelete

34. George Every, *Understanding Eastern Christianity*, p. 73.

35. Schönborn, *Sophrone*, p. 192.

doctrine of St. Maximus takes as its starting point not fallen humanity but the deified humanity of Christ and the saints in the eschaton, and thus exemplifies an "anthropology from above." For St. Maximus it is "the person of the Incarnate Word who is at the centre of all things."[36] Indeed, one could say that in terms of the general principles of his doctrine of free choice, a lack of synergism in theological anthropology or in soteriology, or a lack of a doctrine of real eschatological free choice without any possibility of sinning, implies and presupposes a conception of Christ inherently monothelete in its dimensions. Conversely, one could also say that the dyothelete Christology of the Sixth Ecumenical Council implies that all things are viewed under this dyothelete canon of divine and human action.[37] St. Maximus has truly outlined a unique doctrine of free choice, for by maintaining that there are real free choices upon the part of the saints in the eschaton, and yet that there is no possibility of sinning on their part, he has disentangled the principles of dialectical and moral opposition from ontological distinction. In so doing, he was led to posit the existence of a real distinction between the category of the divine essence and the divine energies, and of the divine energies amongst themselves, which he saw as the "objects" of this eschatological free choice. By doing this, he quite clearly pointed the direction of subsequent development of the formulation of doctrine to Palamas, and not to Aquinas. If there is a unique contribution which St. Maximus made to this development of the formulation of dogma, and if therefore there is a distinctive contribution of this current study, it surely must lie in the fact that St. Maximus is the great synthesizer of doctrine for the East. It was his contribution to outline a doctrine of free choice that wedded plural objects of choice to the Cappadocian and Athanasian distinction between essence

36. Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, p.8, from the Introduction by A.M. Allchin, cf, pp 6-7. Also Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, p. 69: Polycarp Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 223.

37. cf. Vladimir Lossky's remarks on p. 187 of *The Mystical Theology of the astern Church*: "The sacramental and sacred rites which are carried out within the Church thus admit of two wills and of two operations taking place simultaneously: the priest who consecrates the bread and wine upon the altar invokes the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit effects the eucharistic sacrament...."

and energy in God. He is, in this role as synthesizer, "as important for the East as St. Augustine for the West,"[38] and therefore deserves to be known as the equal of Augustine. Indeed, never have two minds argued to such different conclusions on the problem of predestination and free will than have Sts. Augustine and Maximus; never have two approaches to this ancient human concern been so completely disparate. One is compelled, therefore, to turn to a brief comparison of these two approaches, and to an application of the principles gleaned from this study of the Confessor's doctrine of free choice to the recurring Western debates on predestination and free will. In so doing, the true genius of St. Maximus will be discovered in all its spiritual and ecumenical ramifications.

38. Every, *Understanding Eastern Christianity*, p. 73.

Chapter 9; Appendix
A Neo-Patristic Synthesis: Augustinism, Predestination and Free Will, and St. Maximus

Theology must begin with Jesus Christ, and not with general principles, however better, or at any rate, more relevant and illuminating, they may appear to be: as though He were a continuation of the knowledge and Word of God, and not its root and origin, not indeed the very Word of God itself.[1]

All the dubious features of Calvin's doctrine result from the basic failing that in the last analysis he separates God and Jesus Christ.[2]

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics

I. Introductory Remarks

A. The Problem

In the history of Western Christian doctrine perhaps the most frequently and hotly debated issue has been that posed by the classical opposition of human free will and liberty on the one hand and the divine predestination and absolute sovereignty on the other. Jaroslav Pelikan remarks, in his book *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, that "on no Christian doctrine was the Augustinian synthesis" which was bequeathed to the Latin West "as ambiguous as on predestination, and on no doctrine was the theological controversy as bitter."[3] Indeed, an impressive list of

1. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II:2; *The Doctrine of God*, p.2.
2. Ibid., p.111.

names could be compiled of those who have entered the contest: St. Augustine, St. John Cassian, St. Vincent of Lerins, Gottschalk, Hincmar, Anselm, Aquinas, Erasmus, Luther, John Calvin, Jacob Arminius, Theodor Beza, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Karl Barth. And on and on the list could go. Virtually every Western theologian has been compelled to say something about predestination and free will, most in the heat of controversy, a few with calm consideration. Most of these have taken a decisive stand on one or another pole of this issue, each modifying and refashioning, but essentially *repeating* the same Augustinian structuring of the problem in its complex of soteriological and anthropological concerns.

Of the earliest names on the list, only one or two stand out as not quite "fitting" with the rest. For St. Vincent of Lerins, the doctrine of predestination in its Augustinian form simply did not command the authority of the Church's tradition, that is, it was not held "always, everywhere, and by all." For St. John Cassian, the issue was a much simpler one. For him, it took the form of a very problematical dialectic which, when juxtaposed with some of the statements of Scripture, led St. Augustine to logical culs-de-sac from which there was no escape. In his *Third Conference of the Abbot Chaeremon* he poses this problem:

> We must take care not to refer all the merits of the saints to the Lord in such a way as to ascribe nothing but what is evil and perverse to human nature, in doing which we are confuted by the evidence of the most wise Solomon, or rather of the Lord himself, whose words these are; for when the building of the temple was finished and he was praying, he spoke as follows: 'and David my father would have built a house to the name of the Lord God of Israel: and the Lord said to David my father: Whereas thou hast thought in thine heart to build a house to my name, thou hast done well in having this same thing in thy mind.' This thought and purpose of King David, are we to call it good and from God or bad and from man? For if the thought was good and from God, why did He by whom it was inspired refuse that it should be carried into effect? But if it is bad and from man, why is it praised by the Lord?[4]

Some would, of course, be tempted to dismiss this with an *a priori* dogmatism as being simply another example of "semi-

3. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, p. 80f.

4. St. John Cassian, *Third Conference of the Abbot Chaeremon*, In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. VII, p. 429, PL 49: 927A-928A.

Pelagianism," but it cannot be so glibly dismissed, for St. John is confronting a hardened Augustinian position with its own dialectical rigour, and that dialectical rigour is precisely the rigour of the dialectic of *oppositions*: either one should say that all good works come from God as the Augustinian position maintained, and not from man, in this case David, as the Scripture clearly implied, or else one should say that a fallen human, and therefore evil, work found favour with God. St. John's statement is less a reply to Augustinism as it is a distillation of the whole controversy as it then confronted the Christian West, for it aptly summarizes the underlying dialectic at work in the controversy. And this dialectic would eventually produce the confessional divisions on the issue in the period following the Reformation. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, observes in her book *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* that "these divisions... are based on *logical* contradictions in large measure rather than upon biblical exegesis, and this point is significant to the study under consideration."[5] Thus stated, the problem assumes a new dimension. It is not merely an issue of dialectical oppositions and logical contradictions (though one must ask where these contradictions arose), but of ecclesiology; it is a significant ecumenical dilemma of practical and divisive consequences.

It was this very dialectic which was, for Karl Barth, *the* major problem with all previous approaches to the problem of predestination and free will. For him the doctrine of predestination was not "a mixed message of joy and terror, of salvation and damnation. Originally and finally it is not dialectical but non-dialectical. It does not proclaim in the same breath both good and evil, both help and destruction, both life and death."[6] Like St. John Cassian before him, he refuses to march in time to the dialectical drummer, though he would perhaps have been surprised to discover that he was keeping time with a semi-Pelagian. But for Barth the problem also went much deeper. It was also a problem of the *ordo theologiae*, that is, of the order in which theology is to consider its constituent elements. The problem of predestination and free will, considered in this way, is more than just a problem of dialectical oppositions when there

5. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press), p.32.

6. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II:2, p. 13.

should be none, or of resulting ecclesiastical divisions based upon those oppositions when there should be unity. It is also a problem rooted deep within the doctrine of God and the order in which theology deals with its object. It is in this spirit that Barth remarks that "the most common failure has been an insufficient notice of investigation of the question which is the real starting-point for what we have to think and say in this connection."[7] For him, the doctrine of predestination was quite simply an aspect of Christology:

> We are condemned to abstractions so long as our attention is riveted as it were on other men, or rather on man in general, as if we could learn about real men in abstraction from... Jesus. In this case we miss the one archimedean point given us beyond humanity, and therefore the one possibility of discovering the ontological determination of man. It is not yet or no longer theological anthropology if it tries to pose and answer the question of the true being of man from any other angle.[8]

As a result of this inattention to the proper order of theology, the common fault of Calvin (and so many others), according to Barth, was that he separated God and Jesus Christ by considering the divine attribute of predestination solely in reference to God and only later considering it in relation to Jesus Christ.

But there is another aspect to the problem noticed only fairly recently. Why, with a controversy as significant as this and with issues so weighty, is the issue never broached in the Eastern Church?[9] Certainly the Hellenistic East, with its critically acclaimed tendency towards "Hellenization of the Gospel" and a basically "neoplatonic" approach to things did not lack the cultural background, impetus, and intellectual resources to ask and attempt to answer the question. But the East was not, in fact, silent at all, though its questions and answers might seem peculiar to those trained in the Augustinian atmosphere of the West. It could be reasonably argued that Origenism, in its doctrine of the apokatastasis, does indeed hold to a type of deterministic

7. Ibid., p. 25.

8. Ibid., III:2:.132.

9. The first modern author whom I am aware of having drawn attention to the point which follows is John Wesley; "all antiquity for the first four centuries is against you, as is the whole Eastern Church to this day." (*Dialogue Between a Predestinarian and His Friend*, in *Wesley's Works*.) Vol. X. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, p.265.

doctrine.[10] Even with this background, however, when the Eastern "Hellenizers of the Gospel" were confronted with the Augustinian form of predestination, they could not help but see it as a form of "pagan fatal necessity."[11] The accusation of paganism suggests that the Eastern-trained "semi-Pelagians" were accusing their Augustinian opponents of being the *real* "Hellenizers." If this is so, it leads to yet another interesting question and aspect of the problem: *Why (or How) is this doctrine pagan?* In its roots? In its derivations? In its conclusions? Or in all three?

And still the overriding and most nagging question remains: Why did the apokatastasis, having become such a problem through the systematization of Origen, never remain a serious problem for the East after the seventh century? And why, on the other hand, does the West seem constantly plagued by recurring controversies over predestination and free will? I believe the answer, in the light of all the foregoing discussion, to be painfully simple. If the East seems "silent" and the West rather "noisy" on the issue, that is because a very significant name has been omitted from the list of participants in the debate, and that is St. Maximus the Confessor. During the Confessor's lifetime the controversy over the Origenistic apokatastasis and the role of the human will in salvation (Monotheletism) became particularly intense: in its way, as intense as was the Pelagian controversy in the West. And if the name of St. Maximus has been omitted from the list of disputants, it might be because, as St. John Cassian and Karl Barth imply, the West usually views the problem in a primarily dialectical, anthropological and even philosophical light, while the East, under the aegis of St. Maximus the Confessor, views it as a primarily *christological, trinitarian, and eschatological problem.*

B. Rationale

This appendix is thus written in an attempt to outline and explore the implicit logical relationships between the paradigms of

10. One must distinguish between St. Gregory of Nyssa's position and that of Origenism. St. Gregory does not say that the apokatastasis *must* but that it *may* take place. It is arguable that Origen makes this distinction as well, but it is equally arguable that he does not, and, in any case, St. Maximus was constrained to give a new and acceptable interpretation to the "must" and not the "may".

11. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, p.320.

the Western controversy over predestination and free will on the one hand, and St. Maximus' response to Monotheletism and the apokatastasis on the other. The ultimate goal will be to see if perhaps the concerns of the Western controversies might be addressed from within the fullness of St. Maximus' system and doctrine of free choice. The use of the conditional in the previous sentence cannot be stressed too highly, however, for needless to say, such a task is beyond the scope of a few pages, and to treat successfully of the problem in all its fullness would require volumes. Here the best that can be hoped for is a few tentative, and hopefully accurate, observations and suggestions.

To my mind, however, the factors weighing for such an approach to St. Maximus are compelling, and indeed rooted within St. Maximus' own personal situation, positioned as he was between both East and West. Furthermore, our contemporary *Sitz im Leben* seems to demand that such an attempt to outline the possible logical connections between Monotheletism, the apokatastasis, and the predestination - free will controversies be made. My attempt to outline them here thus stems from two motivations, one rather parochial, the other more ecumenical in scope. For the Eastern Orthodox theologian, the fact that the Eastern Church is now clearly established in the West means that he will be compelled ever more and more to seek and give Orthodox answers to some typically "Western" questions. The seemingly artificial approach to St. Maximus here offered is consequently a reflection of this very real and urgent contemporary circumstance. Orthodoxy is no longer in a comfortable provincial position and can no longer afford to intone the axiom that the West simply "asks the wrong questions." This may or may not be true, but in any case it cannot serve as an excuse for theological indolence or a justification of continued theological myopia for the Eastern theologian. This appendix is therefore addressed first and foremost to the Eastern theologian, not only as an outline of one aspect of the contemporary task, but also in the hopes that some general principles might be gleaned from it for the treatment of other issues. The existence of such an appendix is an attempt to suggest that not only do such typically "Western" questions afford the opportunity to find new riches and implications within the Orthodox tradition, but also that it is often the categories or the order in which the West asks its questions which are at fault, but that it is not the questions themselves.

What I am proposing here, in other words, is one small part of the Neopatristic synthesis called for by Fr. Georges Florovsky. He observes:

> Independence from the West must not degenerate into an alienation which simply becomes opposed to the West. For a complete break with the West does not give true and authentic liberation. Presently Orthodoxy can and must no longer circumvent or hush up the issue. This, however, means that Orthodoxy must encounter the West creatively and spiritually. Orthodox Theology is summoned to answer Western questions from the depths of the unbroken Orthodox experience and to confront the movement of Western thought with the unchanged *truth of patristic Orthodoxy*.[12]

Only such an approach can avoid Orthodox triumphalism, of dehumanizing the West and treating it as an unintelligent and wholly pagan *massa damnata*, and dehumanizing ourselves in the process.

But such an effort also has a more ecumenical motivation, for it is precisely on such an issue, where no seeming connections are evident between East and West, that dialogue is all the more necessary in order to uncover hidden attitudes, presuppositions and unspoken processes of reasoning. Nor is the attempt to discover connections between Monotheletism and the predestination controversies, or the attempt to outline the implications of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice for those connections, as completely artificial as it might first appear. It has been suggested by Fr. John Meyendorff that there is a christological aspect to the controversies over predestination and free will.[13] Jaroslav Pelikan goes further than this, and suggests specifically where the problem lies. He notes that

> Western theologians have been somewhat less successful in appropriating the results of the Eastern controversies over one or two wills in Christ, as in Anselm's statement that Christ 'came not to do His own will but that of the Father, because the righteous will that He had did not come from His humanity but from His divinity.'[14]

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12. Georges Florovsky, "Western Influences in Russian Theology," in Volume Three of *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky: Aspects of Church History* (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company), pp. 181-182.

13. John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 180.

If this is true, why have they been less successful? That is to say, what structures might be present in their thought which could prevent or hinder such an appropriation being made? Pelikan does not articulate an answer to these questions. If it is true of Karl Barth that he departed from the common order of treating the issue of predestination and free will and "brilliantly rearranged its conditions of treatment and the relative positions of the component parts,"[15] then what exactly was the basic outline of the previous arrangement, what was wrong with it, and why did it arise in the first place? How does John Calvin come to separate God and Jesus Christ, as Barth alleges he does, in his doctrine of predestination? Where does the dialectic evident in St. John Cassian's remarks come from? What relationships are there between these questions and Monotheletism? And how might St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice be applied to the recurring problematics on predestination and free will?

C. A Suggested Structure of the Inner Logic and Dynamics of the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination

The remarks of Anselm cited previously are significant in that they seem to perpetuate the dialectical principle in evidence in the statement of St. John Cassian and, moreover, to apply that very principle of opposition to Christ in a manner similar to the Monotheletes.[16] It is as if the starting point was the dialectic, and that Christ actually came into the picture at a later point. Anselm clearly affirms the human will of Christ. He does, however, conceive it to be in some sort of opposition to the divine will. He is thus being quite faithful to his master, St. Augustine. Indeed, the latter's remarks on the order of the relationship between Christ and predestination seem particularly illustrative:

> The most illustrious light of predestination and grace is the Saviour Himself - the Mediator between God and man, the man

14. Pelikan, *Growth*, pp. 116f.

15. T. H. L. Parker, "Predestination," in *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), p. 270.

16. It should be noted that Anselm, like St. Maximus, wishes to view the free choice of man apart from sin. cf. *De Libertate Arbitrii*, Chapter One: "That the ability to sin does not belong to freedom of choice."

> Christ Jesus. And pray, (by) what preceding merits of its own, whether by works or of faith, did the human nature which is in Him procure for itself that it should be this?[17]

Leaving aside the important fact that St. Augustine does seem to distinguish more between that humanity which is "in Him" from that implied to be "in us" and focusing only upon the *order* in which predestination and Christology are here arranged, it is apparent that Christ is conceived to be the same relationship to God as regards His humanity as any individual elect. He is the most "illustrative example" amongst many other possible examples; He is the best particular example of a general phenomenon. Christology would thus appear to be subsumed under the greater heading of predestination. If this point were to be put in scholastic terms one would perhaps say that the treatise on Christology is a part of the much broader treatise on predestination, or providence, as is indeed the case in the general arrangement of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas, where in the first book God in His essence and attributes is discussed, followed by three intervening books which discuss providence, and finally by the last book entitled *Salvation* in which the persons of the Trinity are discussed. In this general arrangement one may perhaps see the seeds of the modern "Christologies from below" being already sown.

This fact may not be too easily perceived unless some statements which St. Augustine makes on anthropology in the context of his predestinational writings are recalled. In his treatise *On Rebuke and Grace*, St. Augustine makes three observations which will have a profound influence upon his Christology. The first of these is that only *before the Fall* does he speak of a synergy between God and man. Synergy is thus not conceived by St. Augustine as a function permanent to the nature of divine and human relations, but only as one possible state in which man can exist. The second idea, related to this, which St. Augustine presents is that Adam, by free choice, could forsake this state.[18] The third, and most important, point is that Adam, by his *personal* choice fixes the guilt, the moral responsibility, of all human nature for his sin. The *posse non peccare* has become a *non*

17. St. Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," 30, in *Nicene and ost-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 5, *The Anti-Pelagian Writings*, p. 512.

18. Ibid., "On Rebuke and Grace," 31, p. 484.

posse non peccare, the state of synergy has been permanently destroyed and a new opposition of human nature and its will to the divine nature and will has been put in its place. It is *this* humanity, fallen and dialectically opposed to God in the very opposition of its will to God, that St. Augustine sees as being Christ's humanity.

In a very suggestive sentence, St. Augustine says that it is to the second Adam that the ability "to overcome the will of the flesh (which) lusts in opposition to the Spirit"[19] is given. This one passage cannot ever be lingered over too long. If, as I believe to be the case, St. Augustine here means by "Spirit" the *divine nature of Christ*, then as the context makes clear St. Augustine is perhaps to be credited with the first confession of a real Dyotheletism, for it is "by the will of the Spirit" that Christ "overcomes the will of the flesh, that lusteth in opposition to it."[20]. If this interpretation of St. Augustine is correct, he is to be credited, unlike the Arians and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, with the crucial insight that there are two wills of Christ. However, like the Arians and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, he cannot disentangle the principles of opposition and plurality, though the conclusion he draws from it is somewhat different.

For the Arians, the opposition of Christ's will at Gethsemane to the Passion was a *true opposition*, and therefore, Christ was not God. For St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the same confusion of opposition and distinction held true, but that meant rather that Christ's words - "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; Nevertheless, let not what I will but thy will prevail" - indicated that the Son had no special will of his Own in contradistinction to the Arian position.[21] For St. Augustine, there are indeed two wills in Christ, the divine and the human. But, because he, like the Arians and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, cannot disentangle distinction from opposition, these two wills are opposed. Christ is the most illustrious example of our predestination, for our wills are opposed to God. For St. Gregory, it was not likely that Christ "would oppose will to will"[22] in a sort of

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Léthel, *L'Agonie du Christ*, p. 32.

22. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fourth Theological Oration*, PG 36:108C-109B.

internal opposition. But for St. Augustine, for whom Christ is the best example of our own opposition to God, this internal opposition of wills *would seem to be the precise point he wishes to establish.* For the Arians, the opposition is real, and that means Christ is not God. For St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Christ is God, and therefore the opposition cannot be real. For St. Augustine, Christ is truly both God and man, and the opposition of wills is real nevertheless, *because* Christ is the most illustrative example of predestination.

St. Augustine can consequently state quite boldly and unequivocally that Christ is the most illustrious example of our predestination. In the words of T. H. L. Parker, He "was predestined to be the son of God, not from any merit in Himself, but purely by the grace of God. His predestination is the pattern of man's *particularly in that it is by grace.*"[23] This opposition of the human will comes about in turn by the confusion of person and nature implied in the fact that Adam by his personal choice can fix human nature not only in death but in moral guilt and condemnation. But where does this confusion of person and nature arise?

The answer to this question is best sought in the next stage of the controversy, Spanish Adoptionism, for it is at this stage that the predestinarian controversies became acutely christological and trinitarian, for the controversy seems to some extent to have been stimulated precisely by the sort of "dyothelete" interpretation of St. Augustine's predestinational Christology that I am suggesting. Remarks to the effect that Christ's predestination was like ours because it was by grace allowed Adoptionists to carry the logic of St. Augustine's structure one step further. Felix of Urgel could assert that if Christ in His humanity was the Son of God by grace and not by nature, then "He was adopted by the Father in that (nature) according to which He was the son of David, but not in that (nature) according to which He exists as Lord."[24] And this appeared to make Christ two sons, the "predestinating" divine Son and the "predestined" and adopted human son, the son by grace.[25] And this, according to the Adoptionists' opponents, was their decisive mistake, for they made "sonship a predicate of nature

23. Parker, "Predestination," p. 266.

24. Pelikan, *Growth*, p. 53.

25. Ibid., p. 57.

rather than the person."[26] That is to say, they confused a personal characteristic with the divine essence. Consequently, for the opponents of Spanish Adoptionism, the heresy was tainted by Sabellianism, for it could, by logical and incremental steps, lead to that conclusion.

And it is precisely at this point that the theological and logical connections between East and West multiply like rabbits, for without having had any knowledge of this controversy, St. Photios raised a similar point about confusing essential and personal properties when animadverting the *filioque*:

> And furthermore, if the Father and the Son have all in common, then with all temerity have you excluded the Spirit from what is common to these other two persons. If the Father is Father to the Son, not according to essence but by reason of a personal property, and if this property has been joined with the Son because of their essential affinity, then the Holy Spirit cannot be excluded either![27]

This leads Photios to ask another question. If the personal characteristics of the hypostases of the Trinity may also be essential properties, "then why is it not reasonable that more innovations of the same type can come about?"[28] Most importantly, Photios asks whether the Spirit's procession is to be seen as a procession from the one divine person of Christ, or from His two natures, the point being, that if one could so confuse person and nature, the the Spirit might just as easily be said to proceed from His humanity, since that, technically, was anointed, and therefore Christ.[29] Are these specious connections between the *filioque* and the whole complex issue of predestination and Adoptionism? Not at all, for it was precisely the rise of Spanish Adoptionism, rooted in the christological passages of St. Augustine's predestinational writings, that "may have been a factor in the official affirmation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Son as well as the Father."[30] Like Photios after them, the orthodox opponents of Spanish Adoptionism

26. Ibid.
27. St. Photios, *Mystogogy 34*, PG 102:313D.
28. Ibid., 10, PG 102:289B.
29. Ibid., 93, PG 102:388BC.
30. Pelikan, *Growth of Medieval Theology*, p. 58.

suspected the heresy of Arian and Sabellian implications. We shall return to the *filioque* in a moment.

Is it entirely true to say that St. Augustine really subordinates Christ to the divine attribute of predestination? Here his scriptural exegesis establishes the point. St. Augustine understands John 6:39, "This is the will of the Father who hath sent me, that of all that he hath given me I shall lose nothing", as referring to the individual number of the elect "whose number is so certain that one can neither be added to them nor taken away from them."[31] Even though Scripture stated quite clearly in I Timothy 2:4 that God "wills all men to be saved", this "all", as well as that of John 6:39, referred, in Augustine's mind, only to the totality of the *persons* who are predestined. St. Augustine could not have derived this interpretation from the grammar of the passage in Latin, for there "all" (*omne*) occurs in the neuter *singular*, like the Greek παν, and not in the masculine *plural* (*omnes*) as it would have had to if referring to a number of people. It in itself refers therefore to some particular thing. Consequently, Augustine's interpretation would seem to be derived from other considerations and factors: rather than interpreting the "all" in a "Maximian" manner as referring to the single human nature of Christ, that is, rather than interpreting it *christologically, in reference to Christ*, St. Augustine interprets it *predestinationally, in reference to his general doctrine of predestination*. Christological considerations have been subordinated to an overarching structure of predestination.

The opposition of Christ's human will to the divine will was seen to occur for two reasons: one, because of the confusion of person and nature implied in the Augustinian understanding of original guilt; and two, because fallen humanity is the same humanity to be found in Christ, inclusive of its opposing will. Christ's predestination is therefore the same as ours because it is by grace: the divine will overcomes Christ's human will in an irresistible manner, much as the divine will overcomes the human will in the case of those predestined to salvation. But this led the Spanish Adoptionists to assume two sons, one of nature, the other of grace. And this in turn implied that they confused a personal characteristic, that of sonship, with that of nature and have thus come full circle back to the confusion which began the process. It is this whole vast and intricate matrix which related Spanish

31. St. Augustine, "On Rebuke and Grace," 39, p. 487 NPNF.

Adoptionism and its underlying predestinational Christology to the *filioquist* controversies of the ninth century. This would suggest that the Spanish Adoptionist predestinational Christology and the *filioque* share a common ancestry. That ancestry is Neoplatonism, and it is this consideration which invites, indeed, compels, comparison between St. Maximus and St. Augustine.

The *filioque* doctrine is ultimately derived from the philosophical and neoplatonic definition of simplicity and its accompanying dialectic of oppositions. Each of the problems that attended Neoplatonism - the identity of being and will and its consequence of an eternal generation of the Son indistinguishable and indivisible from an eternal creation, the dialectical opposition of the simplicity-and-Good to the many-and-evil, the flexibility of that simplicity and dialectic in collapsing into an infinite series of beings as in the neoplatonic system of Iamblichus, or in erasing all distinctions between beings as in the Neoplatonic Pantheists, the structural subordination of all pluralities to the One - all these implications are to some extent present in the trinitarian theology of St. Augustine.

St. Augustine assumed that if there could be common ground between theology and philosophy there could be common definitions as well. He found this common definition in the neoplatonic definition of the simplicity of the One.[32] Appropriating this definition as an understanding of the divine essence of the Christian Trinity, as a definition of the unity of the Christian God, he made of it the ultimate basis of his attempted synthesis.[33] Consequently it is at the Augustinian doctrine of God that the point of contact between theology and philosophy occurs, and it is through this doctrine of God that the Augustinian conception of predestination must be approached. A proper understanding of Augustinian Triadology will yield a proper understanding of the logic and structure behind its predestinational doctrine.

When he appropriated the definition of simplicity as a definition of the divine essence of the Trinity, he accepted it uncritically, and thus made his "philosophical first principle one...

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32. Eugene Portalie, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, trans. Ralph J. Bastian, S. R. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers), p. 96.

33. Ibid., p. 90.

with his religious first principle"[34] to such an extent that as the French Roman Catholic Etienne Gilson observed, even his notion of divine being "remained Greek,"[35] that is, ultimately pagan. Therefore, insofar as his doctrine of predestination is derived from this pagan definition of the divine essence, it is to that extent that it is pagan in its roots. It is at the point of this definition that the divine essence begins to be abstracted from the plurality of attributes and persons as a prolegomenon to theology. In other words, once he had assumed the simplicity as a definition of the divine essence in its full Neoplatonic sense, the essence becomes increasingly singled out and strictly distinguished from all the divine "pluralities," the attributes and the persons. The dialectic of opposition between the One and the many is already in evidence in this step, and two things occur because of it. First, the unity of God is seen in impersonal and abstract terms. St. Augustine states it this way: "The divinity is the unity of the Trinity."[36] But more important is the fact that, at this stage at least, the persons and the attributes are accorded the same logical status. And thus St. Augustine can say that

> He is called in respect to Himself both God, and great, and good, and just, and anything else of the kind; and just as to Him *to be is the same as to be God, or as to be great, or as to be good, so it is the same thing to Him to be as to be a person.*[37]

Underlying these mutual identities is the simplicity, once again functioning as a great metaphysical "equals" (=) sign, and consequently the conclusion that the persons are attributes or that the attributes are persons is inescapable.[38]

But when he turns to consider the attributes themselves, they become identical with the divine essence and alternative names for it: "The Godhead," he writes, "is absolutely simple

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34. Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 41.

35. Ibid., 7:6:11.

36. St. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, I:88:15.

37. Ibid., 7:6:11.

38. Augustine actually carries this logic much further, saying at one point that "since the three together are one God, why not also one person...."(7:4:8). In another place he uses the phrase "the person of the Trinity" (2:10:18). Richard Haugh remarks in his study of St. Photios, *Photius and the Carolingians*, that "it is clear in which direction Augustine is inclined." (p. 199)

essence, and *therefore to be is there the same as to be wise.*"[39] And this leads to the further implication that since the attributes are identical to the essence, they are identical to each other: "In regard to the essence of truth, to be true is the same as to be and to be is the same as to be great... therefore to be great is the same as to be true."[40] A=B and B=C, ergo A=C. Reason, logic, and simplicity are the very essence of the divine essence. It is this identity of attributes amongst themselves which led to three very different conclusions, conclusions which are nevertheless related, for they depend upon this identification of the attributes amongst themselves.

First, it is this identity of the attributes with themselves and with the divine essence that allowed Thomas Aquinas, who inherited this definitional understanding of the divine simplicity from St. Augustine, to assert the identity of the divine essence with the divine will. The simplicity is absolute; therefore "God's will is not other than His essence,"[41] a proposition common with Plotinus, and a proposition at the root of the Origenist problematic. Unlike the Athanasian response to this problematic, which depended upon the distinction between essence and attributes being a formal one, this understanding of the simplicity is a definitional one, and it is this which is the ultimate root of the Western difficulties with Palamism: there cannot be ultimate and equal goods which are really distinct from the divine essence *as well as being really distinct from each other.*

Second, the Augustinian doctrine of predestination must, to a great degree, be referred to this identity of attributes amongst themselves, in other words, to predestinate is the same as to foreknow.[42] If God foreknows the damned and the elect, He also predestines them. The evaluation of Jaroslav Pelikan is therefore not entirely correct. It is in regard to this identification of the attributes of predestination and foreknowledge that he wrote "what was needed to correct and clarify the Augustinian doctrine was a more precise definition of predestination that would

39. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 7:1:2.

40. Ibid., 8:1:2.

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book One: *God*, Questions 73 and 74.

42. cf. St. Augustine, *Ad Romanos Expositio*, 8:29.

distinguish it from grace."[43] But since the deterministic aspects of Augustinism appear to be not so much biblical as neoplatonic and logical, as they are rooted in a particular dialectically-derived definition of the divine essence, it would appear that what is needed is precisely not another definition, but a *non*-definitional understanding of the divine simplicity, one which would not permit the term to function as an "equals" (=) sign which identifies the pluralities of attributes.

Finally, this identification of the attributes amongst themselves plays an important role in the derivation of the *filioque*. Because the categories of persons and attributes, as multiplicities contrasted to the simple essence, all serve as logically interchangeable definitions of the simple divine "something", the question for St. Augustine then became one of securely maintaining the real distinction of persons in the face of a simplicity which had already nullified the real quality and distinctions of the attributes amongst themselves. Here the subordination of the persons and attributes to the essence in the *ordo theologiae* also provides St. Augustine with the means to attempt to distinguish the persons from each other. Having assumed an absolute, definitional simplicity, the persons can no longer be absolute hypostases, but are merely relations, since the names Father, Son, and Spirit are terms relative to each other.[44] Here again there is a subtle but nevertheless real play of the dialectic of oppositions. One no longer begins with the three persons (since one has already begun theology at the divine essence) and then moves to consider their relations, but begins more with their relative quality, with the relation between the persons, itself. In other words, there is an artificial opposition of any given person to the other two.[45] It is at this point that the flexibility of St. Augustine's neoplatonic basis begins to surface in a more acute form.

Because the Arians defined deity by the personal feature of the Father, causality, they could deny the full deity of Christ because He did not cause the Father. Augustine replies by arguing for the full deity of Christ by making Him the cause of another

43. Pelikan, *Emergence*, p. 321.

44. St. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 6:5:6.

45. cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book Four: *Salvation*, 2:5.

fully divine person, the Holy Spirit. This "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself,"[46] and from this one must go on to conclude that

> as the Father has in Himself that the Holy Spirit should proceed from Him so He has given to the Son that the Same spirit should proceed from Him (the Son).... For if the Son has of the Father whatever He (the Father) has, then certainly He has of the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from Him.[47]

In this manner then Augustine came to argue for the deity of Christ by means of the double procession, for if the Son, acting as a cause along with the Father, causes the Spirit, then clearly the Son is God. But underlying this argument against Arianism is its acceptance of the Arian definition of essential deity in terms of the causality of the Father.

But there is a new structural element in this confusion. It is the element of a subordination of the category of persons to that of the attributes. The Son receives His causality from the Father, not on the basis of a direct and immediate appeal to the simplicity of the divine essence, but by more indirect means, that of the attributes which the Father and the Son have in common. This fact sets up the *ordo theologiae* in which a great deal of subsequent Western theology proceeds: beginning with the divine essence, it then considers the attributes, and only at the end considers the persons. On the strictly formal level of structure, there is a subordination of persons to the attributes which are in turn subordinated to the essence. And within the final level of discourse, the persons, the Holy Spirit is seen to proceed from an Uncaused Cause, the Father, and a Caused Cause, the Son, much as the neoplatonic World-Soul proceeded from both the One and the *Nous*.

> For we cannot say that the Holy Spirit is not life, while the Father is life, and the Son is life: and hence as the Father... has life in Himself; so He has given to Him that life should proceed from Him as it also proceeds from Himself.[48]

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46. St. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 7:3:5.

47. Ibid., 15:27:47.

48. Ibid., 15:27:48. As has been pointed out by some, the very fact that the Father has *given* to the Son the Spirit's procession means that the Spirit does not proceed in the same way from the Son as He does from the Father.

Here not only has the property of causality, the unique personal distinction of the Father, been exchanged with the Son on the basis of the common attribute of life, but that attribute which proceeds from the Father and the Son turns out to be the Holy Spirit. It is precisely the Holy Spirit Who is the attribute common to both. Thus a person has been confused with a common attribute of all three persons.

The whole process seems to defeat itself at every turn. Having made the Spirit proceed from the Father and the Son because the Father and the Son share common attributes, since the essence is simple, the Spirit then becomes an attribute, and thus defines the essence and therefore is indeed the essence, the unity of the Trinity. St. Augustine puts it quite clearly:

> Because both the Father is a spirit and the Son is a spirit, and because the Father is Holy and the Son is Holy, therefore, since the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, and certainly God is Holy, and God is a spirit, the Trinity can be called also the Holy Spirit.[49]

These results may be summarized in a "flow chart" to show the interplay of simplicity, logic, and structure:

I. The Divine Essence:

   A. The divine essence is simple by definition.

   B. If the divine essence is simple by definition, then several things follow:

      1. The essence is equivalent to the attributes both severally and individually.

      2. The divine essence is equivalent to the persons, both severally and individually.

   C. Like the neoplatonic One, the simplicity of the divine essence transcends the multiplicity of the divine pluralities, the attributes and persons, as unity transcends multiplicity. Several things follow.

II. The attributes:

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49. Ibid., 5:11:12.

A. Structurally, the attributes are subordinated to the divine essence, but

B. The attributes have the same ontological status and are in fact identical to the divine essence, and therefore

C. The divine attributes are identical to each other and are therefore wholly indistinguishable. From this, four results obtain:

1. The will of God is the Essence of God.

2. To predestine is the same as to foreknow.

3. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son because the Father and the Son share the common attribute of life, and the Father's personal feature of causality has been given to the Son on that basis.

4. Palamism is to be combatted, not because it affirms that the divine energies are uncreated so much as it affirms that they are really and formally distinct, a view in direct conflict with the definitional model of the divine simplicity.

III. The Persons:

A. At this lowest and final level of discourse, the persons are subordinated to the attributes because

1. Christ is subordinate to an overarching theory which concentrates on the attribute of predestination, and

2. The Spirit's procession from the Father has been given to the Son because the Father and the Son share common attributes. And within this level of discourse, an effective subordination of the Spirit to the Son to the Father occurs,

a. the Father having no distinctions,

b. the Son having one distinction, that of being caused,

c. and of the Spirit having two distinctions, those of being caused by two different classes of causes.

B. The Holy Spirit, because He proceeds from the Father and the Son, becomes the new focus of unity in the Trinity because

1. The name "Holy Spirit" defines the divine essence by two of its attributes, holiness and spirituality, and

2. Is thus capable of signifying the entire Trinity.

IV. The whole cycle of proceeding has returned to the very Divine Essence from which it began.[50]

This outline permits us to see that both the predestinational and the pneumatological structure of Augustinism is the same and derived from a common source. It permits us to answer the question of how Calvin could come to "separate God and Christ", for that separation is implicit in the whole *ordo theologiae* of any Augustinian theology as it is also implicit in the particular examples of his predestinationalism and in his filioquism. The chart also permits one to see how the dialectic of oppositions permeates both the triadological and predestinarian concerns: as both are derived from the definition of simplicity, this was inevitable, for God can only be defined as simple by opposition to the multiplicity of the world. If God is simple and one, the world is many; if God is good, multiplicity is evil, and therefore free choice, which requires a plurality of objects amongst which to choose, must be inherently evil; if God predestines a man to salvation and beatitude, that man is not free to choose amongst a multiplicity of objects of choice (for they do not exist): he is free only from the necessity of choice.

The interplay of all these issues - the dialectic of oppositions, person, nature, free will and predestination and their relationships to Monotheletism and Origenism - reaches, if not an intentional, then at least a logical, climax in the following quotation from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*:

> Its authors did not know how to distinguish what is simply one, and what is one by order. For they saw the human will in Christ ordered entirely beneath the divine will so that Christ willed nothing with his human will except that which the divine will disposed him to will.[51]

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50. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book Four: *Salvation*, 26:6.

Without the benefit of the context of this passage, how would one interpret such a statement? To whom is Thomas referring? To the Spanish Adoptionists and their "predestinationally derived" Christology? Or to Prosper of Aquitaine and the extreme Augustinians and their explanations of how divine grace works in man? Or even to Anselm? In reality, Thomas is describing the Monotheletes, but, and this is highly important, in language which some would assert is equally applicable to the Augustinian tradition of the West. It would therefore seem to follow that there are logical connections between Augustinism and Monotheletism through the neoplatonic presuppositions and methods common to their backgrounds. Plurality equals opposition and some slight degree of imperfection from the absolutely Simple Good. Therefore, free choice, since it demands a plurality of objects from which to choose, is defined also in terms of a moral opposition between good and evil. If it is therefore affirmed of the saints in eternity, one must either admit a multiplicity of Falls, or assert its final exclusion in favour of a vision of a simple, unitary Good which is the divine essence. If this vision of heaven and its "singleness" seems a bit boring, it is only because it follows inevitably from the definition of simplicity and a dialectical conception of free choice.

II. St. Maximus' Doctrine of Free Choice and its Applications to the Problem of Predestination and Free Will

St. Maximus' dyothelete Christology and anthropology were developed in response to two seemingly unrelated heresies, Origenism and, in particular, the apokatastasis, and Monotheletism. This means that at the outset the Confessor does not see the problem as a philosophical problem in any degree, but first and always a christological and triadological problem to be approached from the perspective of the distinction between persons, energies, and essence. According to Polycarp Sherwood

> The very tenor (of his refutation of Origenism) exacted a preoccupation with the last things wholly congenial to monastic

51. Ibid., 36:10.

> circles. This means that the whole of theology tends to be viewed under the formality of the consummation of all in Christ.[52]

This Christocentricity was not only a presupposition but a methodological principle with the profoundest implications for the problem at hand. Because of it, the Confessor could conclude, in a very predestinarian manner, that "God's Word and God wills ever and in all to effect the mystery of His embodiment."[53] How then does St. Maximus, once having affirmed this, avoid the error of the apokatastasis? The answer at first appears to be quite simple: Christ produces the permanence of everlasting being for all of human *nature*, but only "as each human *hypostasis*" wills.[54] To put this point in more "Calvinistic" terms makes its implications quite clear: the resurrection is the one, universal, irreformable and ineluctable fact of all human destinies, admitting of no exceptions. However, the *type* or *state* of that resurrection, that is to say, Ever-*Ill* or Ever-*Well* Being depends upon the *person*. One might go so far as to say that the irresistible will of God to save all men is viewed as being fulfilled by Christ in His resurrection of all human nature to everlasting being. The "all" of St. John 6:39 would thus be taken as referring to Christ's humanity, that is, to His human nature, and not to a predestined number of human persons. It is this humanity in all its fullness and perfection in Christ which is raised, and nothing is lost to it if some person wills not to be saved. Nothing has been denied to God's sovereignty because nothing is lacking to Christ's humanity, and yet nothing has been denied to personal human liberty either.

But this implies two things, that the will is a feature not so much of the nature as it is of the person, and therefore one might conclude that the nature is compelled. And it is here that a great problem occurs. To state that the will is a hypostatic characteristic is simply another way of stating the monothelete hypothesis that Christ has only one will, that of His divine hypostasis. His humanity in this instance would remain passive before the divine action. This in turn determines the human nature to the General Resurrection in such a manner that it may not be rejected in individual human hypostases. But this is not the problem. The problem, if the will is hypostatic, is this: How could individual

52. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus*, p. 223.

53. St. Maximus, *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1084CD, cited Sherwood, *Earlier*, p. 175.

54. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 171.

human hypostases choose to *accept* eternal beatitude when it is precisely the human will *as such* which needs redemption, and when that very will is denied to Christ? If the will were hypostatic and not natural, then Christ would have had to assume a human person in addition to the human nature in order to heal the human will. But this was Nestorianism. Nor could the healing of one human Person's will have had the universal implications necessary for the salvation of humanity, of human nature, for this healing of the will would have come to only one individual man. Thus the conclusion that the will "was an attribute of nature and not of an hypostasis" seemed compelled and necessary.[55] But this too returns one to the apokatastasis. If the will were solely natural then all human persons will be resurrected to eternal beatitude whether they will it or not. Which is it to be? Is the will an attribute of nature or of person?

St. Maximus drew a novel and somewhat startling conclusion which is stated here in its sharpest possible form so that this novelty is truly apparent. The only way out of the impasse was that there had to be *two human wills* just as there were two wills of Christ, or rather, there had to be a distinction between the will as a property of nature and the equally real mode of using and employing the will which was a property of the person.

This has the deepest implications, for nature and its properties as created by God, are good. The natural will thus chooses nothing but the good. Opposition to the divine will is thus always in the evil mode of the employment of the will, and is thus always personal. And this in turn means that free choice is not ultimately concerned with a dialectic of opposition between the divine and human natures in Christ, or between evil and good choices in man himself. This distinction between the natural will and the mode of employing that will was made on the basis of Christology and Trinitarian Theology. It depends upon there being a real distinction between persons and nature. And this in turn means that St. Maximus is working with a very different conception of the divine simplicity than is St. Augustine. Consequently, as Polycarp Sherwood so correctly observed, if one did not share St. Maximus' christological and trinitarian presuppositions and method, then nothing would be easier to neglect that this distinction of wills.[56] Notably, the distinction is

55. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, p. 72.

not, as in Neoplatonism and Augustinism, between liberty - the freedom from the necessity of choice - and free will - the freedom to choose - but more fundamentally, it is the distinction between the freedom to choose amongst various goods, which is natural, and the freedom to reject those choices in favour of evil, which is personal. It is first and foremost a distinction between two very different kinds of free choice, one based upon a plurality of goods, the other based upon a moral dialectic.

This implies that there is real free choice in eternity, a proposition that to an Augustinian might seem astonishing at first glance. God is an absolutely simple essence, and therefore, what can there be to choose from in eternity? If the Good is simple by definition, then any choice of a distinct object will be evil by definition. But this follows only if one is in fact working with a particular conception of the simplicity, one which would nominalise the attributes of God and identify them with the divine essence and with each other. This is clearly not what St. Maximus had in mind. In addition to a distinction in God between His Persons and His essence, there is also the distinction between His essence and His divine and uncreated *logoi*, which St. Maximus also calls energies. God is never without His Wisdom, Justice, and other attributes. These infinities are around God, but are not God in His essence, and yet they are fully divine and in no way compromise His divine simplicity. They are therefore not identical to the essence nor to each other. They are, however, divine predeterminations and wills.[57] There is thus an infinite number of things to choose in the eschaton, and no possibility of an evil choice because there is no opposition between these goods, nor gradation of goodness - some more, some less good than others - in any of these objects. It is in fact an eschatological case of synergy which was indeed implied by the decision of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, for the creature wills in accordance with these divine *logoi* and the individual creature, just as there is no opposition between the divine and the human will in Christ. This is the final blow to any neoplatonically based conception of human liberty, for it allows human free choice to continue in the eschaton without any possibility of sinning, and avoids the implications of the

56. Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, p. 202.

57. St. Maximus, *Ambigua 7*, PG 91:1085A.

Western doctrine of the Vision of God in His divine essence which is "simple" in that other, neoplatonic, sense.

One may thus distinguish between three broad approaches to the problem of human liberty and divine providence in the history of doctrine:

I. the Origenistic, for which God was compelled to create due to the identity of His will with His essence;

II. the Augustinian, for which God is simple, but is nonetheless free to choose to create or not to create, and for which man is free to choose between opposites both before and after the Fall, but not in the eschaton; and

III. the Maximian, where free choice is affirmed of both God in "eternity past" and of the saints in "eternity future." (See the following table.)

Origen / Origenism	St. Augustine / Augustinism	St. Maximus
God is one, simple, and immutable. Ergo God's goodness = God's immutability. God is not free to choose to create or not to create (*non posse eligere*).	God is one, simple, and immutable. To be true = to be, and to be = to be great, ergo to be true = to be great. God's will is His essence, but He is still free to create or not to create, though this does not necessarily follow from the premiss.	God is one and simple, but not in the sense that the energies (or attributes) are identical. Therefore God's Wisdom is truth, justice, etc. His attributes equal each other only in their equal divinity. God is able to create because His will is not the same thing as His essence.
Stasis The preexistent souls are able to choose to Fall or not to Fall, and this choice is dialectically defined.	**Genesis** Souls are created but able to choose between good and evil (*posse eligere = posse non peccare*).	**Genesis** Souls do not preexist and are able to choose from several alternatives, but these are not necessarily evil (*posse eligere = posse non peccare*).
Kinesis As God is Good and immutable and simple, any multiplicity and motion are inherently evil (*non posse non peccare*).	**Kinesis** This stage in St. Augustine involves two foci: a) Sin: *non posse non peccare* and b) Conversion: *posse non peccare.* Choice in either case is dialectically defined.	**Kinesis** This stage in St. Maximus involves two foci: a) Man: is able to choose freely amongst several goods by nature, and b) The Fall: dialectically conditions all choices in this world, but this moral dilemma is not the natural condition of choice.
Genesis The Fall into diversity and materiality.	**Stasis** In the eschatological presence of God's absolute simplicity, man is not able to choose for there are no real and multiple objects from which to choose (*non posse peccare = non posse eligere*).	**Stasis** The saints are able to choose amongst many equally good objects of choice which excludes any possibility of sinning (*posse eligere ≠ posse peccare*, but *posse eligere = non posse peccare*).

These observations on St. Augustine and St. Maximus permit us to speculate about possible applications of the Confessor's theology to the doctrine of predestination and free will, which speculations I present in proposition form for the sake of clarity.

(1)

Proper theological method subsumes theological questions and doctrines under the two correlative headings of Christology and Triadology, for all properly theological doctrines would appear to have christological and triadological implications. Any proposition, method, or other statement which does not start directly and consciously from this context does not go under the name of Christian theology.[58]

All theology must therefore be thoroughly grounded in the distinction of person and nature. Each of these categories must be given equal weight and emphasis with the other. Consequently, there are two basic ways in which this distinction may be lost. On the one hand, person may be subordinated to nature in order of concepts to such an extent that it becomes absorbed in it as a special kind of attribute of nature. Within the context of the discussion on predestination and free will, the apokatastasis implies just such a confusion, for the human nature of Christ was seen to determine every human person's eternal bliss in spite of, and apart from, the individual's gnomic reception of the grace conferred by Christ. On the other hand, nature may be subordinated and confused with person, and to some extent, defined as the aggregate of persons. The doctrine of the limited atonement is perhaps an example of this process, for the human nature of Christ is defined in terms of its efficaciousness for a predetermined number of individual elect: Christ loses no *one* that the Father has given Him, but raises *them* up at the last day.

58. That I am indebted to Karl Barth is quite obvious. Indeed, if the extent of this indebtedness were to be documented fully, the entire second volume of his *Church Dogmatics* would have to be cited. What is not attributed to him is the poverty of my own expressions and thought.

(2)

Proper christological method is recapitulational, for Christ possesses and is all the fullness of Deity and of humanity; He is the Logos and logoi of all universals common to Deity and to humanity. In Him, therefore, are to be found the logoi of predestination and of free choice, and He is thus the means by which to distinguish any Christian doctrine of predestination from Stoic, Neoplatonic, Judaic, or Mohammedan counterparts.[59]

Christ, as the *Logos* of all created things, thus effectively determines all things, demonstrating this by the miracles which He performs, and by his fulfillment of the *logoi* of Old Testament prophecy.[60] By becoming Incarnate, He has revealed the decrees of God. As the One *Logos* Who is the many *logoi* which are the divine "predeterminations" and "wills" of creation, our Lord also effectively recapitulates these in Himself, in His miracles and fulfillments of all prophecy.

It is Jesus Christ, therefore, Who in the totality, completeness, and perfection of His Incarnation, is the sole means to understand divine predestination; it is He by Whom it is wrought in the Incarnation; it is He Who, in the Incarnation, is the cause of predestination, the point from which it originates, and the goal to which it must tend (that Christ may be all in all[61]), and the only Head under Whom its particulars are to be referred.

(3)

The One Son freely chooses, according to the unique hypostatic mode of existence proper to Him as Son and Word, in both of His natures, each nature actively willing the salvation of all men.

This is the great discovery of the Saint Maximus. It must be strictly contrasted to Barth, for whom the human nature still tends to be viewed somewhat too passively, and solely from the standpoint of its election by God. According to St. Maximus, it is

59. cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II:32:2, p. 48.

60. Such is the argument of St Athanasius in *De Incarnatione Verbum Dei.*

61. cf. Colossians 3:11.

not only elected, but primarily *electing*. It is necessary therefore to amend the propositions of Barth: We err if and when we attempt to understand either God's sovereignty of man's free choice apart from each other, and therefore in abstraction from and prior to Jesus Christ.

In Him are also revealed the unique trinitarian implications of predestination: "For He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is the Head of the Body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the first born of the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."[62] Thus, there is no divine "decree" of God the Father standing over and above His Son. The Father has predestined in one act of predestination along with, and not apart from, the Son and His Economy.

(4)

In Christ's human nature which is consubstantial with all men, God humanly wills, decrees, and perfectly fulfills the salvation of all men, for no human being is untouched by His Incarnation, and nothing is detracted from His sovereignty as God if individual persons choose not to accept salvation.

Nothing is lost to His sovereignty as God Incarnate precisely because nothing is lost to the perfection of His human nature; it retains its full integrity as human *nature* despite the fact that individual *persons* reject Him. Hence, the expression current in some evangelical circles, "once saved always saved", bears a certain truth, if seen in this context, namely, that all human nature, once assumed by Christ in its totality, eternally abides in and with God by virtue of the Word's hypostatic union with it.

(5)

Christ, being truly consubstantial with all men, truly died for all men, and thus His atoning Passion, Death, and Resurrection are in no way limited.[63]

In turn, the doctrine of the limited atonement may be reversed to show its hidden and heretical implications: If not all

62. Colossians 1:17-19.

men rise with the second Adam then not all die with the first Adam. There would consequently be some men who, not being affected by the consubstantiality of Christ's human nature, would not be consubstantial with Him. Therefore, they would not be in Adam either. Not being in Adam, they would have no need of Christ. This is a denial of the inheritance of ancestral sin, and is therefore Pelagianism.[64] The way out of this impasse is the distinction between person and nature, and between the mode of the employment of the will and the natural will itself.

Furthermore, if Christ's human nature is efficacious in salvation only for a number of elected individuals, then it would appear that Christ's humanity, insofar as it *is* efficacious for those individuals, is united with them not naturally but only by the object of their wills, since His human nature itself is *not* united with them. This union only in object of will between God and man in Christ is Nestorianism.

It would also appear that, on this view, the human nature of the elected individuals gives nothing to election, and Christ's human nature certainly does not, as it affects only the elected individuals. Human nature therefore either has no will, which is a kind of "anthropological" Apollinarianism, or it is merely ineffectual in salvation ("soteriological" Apollinarianism).Christ's human decision of salvation at Gethsemane is therefore illusory, and this is Docetism.

(6)

The distinction between person and nature is fundamental to any biblical exegesis on the question of predestination and free will.

The will, operation, power, and dominion of God do not exist in the abstract, any more than there is a "God in general." Rather, each of there divine energies is uniquely enhypostasized in the

63. Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims posed the problem quite adequately as early as 853: "Just as there is not, has not been, and will not be any human being whose nature was not assumed in our Lord Jesus Christ, so there is not, has not been, and will not be any human being for whom He has not suffered." (PL 125:282, cited in Pelikan, *Growth*, p. 91).

64. cf. St. John Cassian, *Third Conference*, 7: "If He calls not all generally but only some, it follows that not all are heavy laden either with original or actual sin...."

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the manner of Holy Scripture itself. It speaks not of the "will of essence" but of the "will of Him Who sent me;" it speaks not of "divine grace" in the abstract, but of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, the Augustinian "doctrine of Appropriations" is given a more solid trinitarian basis.

(7)

Concepts such as prevenient grace should be referred to the Incarnation and to the Holy Spirit's eternal abiding upon the Word; God is thus in men "to will and work His good pleasure" by virtue of His Incarnation and because of the Holy Spirit's unique relationship in the Economy to the human nature in Christ.

(8)

The dispute between Calvinism and Arminianism perhaps results because of the lack of a clear theology and application of the categories of person and nature. Therefore, both parties in this internecine dispute share a common lack of the distinction between natural will and the mode of willing.

Such a lack of distinction between person and nature is the common Western trinitarian inheritance from the *filioque*. The Calvinist (and the Lutheran) position views the will of humanity as set in sin from the birth of the individual. The individual is therefore guilty of God's wrath even in infancy. The Arminian position, opposing this view, maintains that the human will is only weakened, not totally depraved; only individuals can freely choose, and therefore only individuals can experience guilt and wrath. The one thus appears to locate the will almost exclusively in nature, the other in the person. The problem is perhaps that both sides are maintaining a kind of "anthropological Monotheletism", for each can fundamentally conceive of only one kind of human will.[65]

If the human will exists in its post-lapsarian state in a kind of natural opposition to the divine will - a concept attested by St.

65. The terms "Arminian" and "Calvinist" are being used symbolically here to designate positions that, to varying degrees, have been maintained throughout the doctrinal history of the Christian West since St. Augustine's time. They are chosen simply for their rather widespread recognition in this country.

Augustine who views even *Christ's* human will in this manner - then the first Adam, by his personal, gnomic choice overcame the *logos* of his natural will and energy to such an extent that human nature became morally guilty and accountable. To this extent, person and nature were confused, for only by such confusion is it possible to say that a natural corruption bears with it a moral and personal guilt. To attribute to the first Adam the strength of will such that he could overcome this distinction would appear to threaten the sovereignty of the trinitarian God Who created man in His image. In order to protect and affirm God's sovereignty, one might logically be led, as was John Calvin, to say that "the decree is dreadful indeed... yet no one can deny that God foreknew what end man was to have before he created him, and consequently foreknew because he so ordained by his decree."[66]

(9)

From the standpoint of the theology of St. Maximus, the roots of any fatalistic system would therefore seem to be threefold:

1. *in the failure to distinguish between person and nature,*
2. *in the failure to distinguish between a nature and its energies, and*
3. *in the inability of any system which accepts the absolute simplicity of the divine essence to admit of a real plurality of Goods in the Good.*

In this case, one must turn to the trinitarian roots of the predestinational disputes to determine whether or not they have resulted from too uncritical an acceptance of the doctrine of the simplicity of God's essence. In short, one must turn once again to the Augustinian filioquist Triadology in order to reassess the exact nature and scope of the process of the "Hellenization" of the Gospel. In contradistinction to the simplicity being a definition of the divine essence, it should be urged that the divine essence itself is incomprehensible, and that the simplicity itself is an energy of

66. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III:23:7, p. 955 (trans. Ford Lewis Battles). The entire passage deserves careful consideration, for it is evident not only that Calvin is somewhat uncomfortable with his conclusion, but also that he is taking great pains to cast his doctrine within the framework of the person-nature distinction.

that essence.[67] Only on such a basis can one avoid the implication that the attributes are mutually identifiable. One cannot, on this basis, say that "to predestine is to foreknow," as if these were the very same *thing*. Neither, on this basis, can one confuse God's eternal essence, His creative will, or the Son's generation. Conversely, if one accepts the definition of the simplicity of God's essence, it follows that one will be led, by the logic of that doctrine, to reproduce some form of the Origenist Problematic that either Creation is eternal or the *Logos* is created. This, in fact, does occur in both St. Augustine (*The City of God*, Book XII, 16) and in Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Contra Gentiles* I, Questions 73:1, 4: 74:1,4). To maintain simultaneously a doctrine of divine sovereignty and a definition of essential simplicity of God would therefore seem to be mutually exclusive.

***

If one senses the "Barthian" quality of these propositions, and of the implications of St. Maximus' doctrine of free choice, then this is not accidental, for both men would affirm quite unequivocally that theology must consistently start with Christ, particularly when the Christian believer contemplates the mystery of predestination and free will. It is to the credit of St. Maximus, however, that he not only consistently applied this canon first, but that his doctrine, so much more aware of its trinitarian roots, proved capable of avoiding the charge of universalism from which even so great a theologian as Barth was not exempt. The purpose of these propositions has therefore not been polemical, but merely to suggest the timely and practical value that patristic theology in general, and Maximian theology in particular, has for both the Eastern and Western theologian in the ecumenical context of the twentieth century. It is in this spirit that I hope that my remarks have not been so general as to become caricatures. Here I am only attempting to offer a very brief synopsis of a theological task that remains to be done. In this spirit I also hope that my remarks will not offend either Western or Eastern eyes; everything I have written has been written in a tentative spirit, with full realization that much, much more could have been written, and that much which was written could have been said much better.

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67. St. Gregory Palamas, *Triads*, pp. 78, 82.

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Glossary

This study presupposes a certain familiarity on the part of the reader with the concepts and technical vocabulary of patristic theology. The following glossary is included for the benefit of those not yet acquainted with these terms. These definitions are not comprehensive. They merely identify, as briefly as possible, certain concepts and names as used in the context of this study, and provide a starting point for further inquiry.

Adoptionism, Spanish:
The doctrine propounded in the eighth century by Elipandus, Archbishop of Toledo, and Felix, Bishop of Urgel, that the Word "adopted" the humanity of Jesus, thus making Christ the Son of God only by Grace. The view was fueled by St. Augustine's anti -Pelagian writings.

Apollinarianism:
The heresy that Christ had no human soul and intellect, these being replaced by the Word. What is human in Christ is therefore only His flesh.

Apokatastasis:
The word has several meanings in patristic literature: return, restoration, reinstatement, usually in reference to a restoration of a former state of things. In the various uses here, it means a restoration of all things to their state before the fall. Thus, it becomes shorthand for the doctrine of universal salvation, for if all things are restored to this state, even the devils will ultimately be saved.

Arianism:
The heresy that Christ is God only in the sense of being the highest and greatest of creatures.

Arminianism:
The type of Calvinism systematized by the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). The Arminians believed that God's sovereignty and man's free choice were compatible, and thus became embroiled in controversy with the strict Calvinists, for whom they were not. Sometimes called "Sublapsarianism."

Calvinism:

The systematization of the doctrines of the Reformer John Calvin (1509-64), usually associated with a belief in Absolute predestination and the impotence of human free choice, though Calvinism itself is a much richer system than this bold statement. Sometimes called "supralapsarianism," this form of Calvinism reached it's ultimate expression at the Synod of Dordt (1618-19) which was precisely a reaction to Arminianism. Five doctrines were eventually asserted which have become almost synonymous in some circles with the name "Calvinism." They are:

1) Total depravity (of man)
2) Unconditional election
3) Limited atonement
4) Irresistable grace
5) Perseverance of the saints.

Sometimes these doctrines are referred to by the acrostic T.U.L.I.P. Many Baptist evangelicals in the U.S. hold the first, second, and fifth of these doctrines.

Cappadocian Fathers:

St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus (the Theologian), and St. Gregory of Nyssa.

Cyril, St.:

Patriarch of Alexandria from 412 to 444 and ardent foe of Nestorianism. To St. Cyril must be credited the Church's ultimate adoption of the word "Theotokos" as a safeguard against Nestorius' heresy.

Cyrillic Chalcedonianism:

Simply a shorthand for the view that Chalcedon was, from the first, always understood from the perspective of St. Cyril of Alexandria. It should not be taken as representative of a movement to impose an interpretation on Chalcedon that the Council itself did not hold. The majority of bishops at Chalcedon were, in fact, supporters of St. Cyril.

Docetism:

The heresy which considers that the humanity and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ are apparent rather than real. It was less a stated body of coherent doctrine and more of a tendency, evident as early as the New Testament period and later incorporated into the various Gnostic systems. The word

"Docetism" is from the Greek word δοκέω which means "I seem" or "I appear."

Dyotheletism:

From the Greek, meaning "two wills."

Eschaton:

From the Greek word for "last", in this case meaning "the last" or "final" state of the saints in heaven.

Eutychianism:

The Heresy of Eutyches (378-454), an archimandrite in Constantinople. The heresy itself is a crude form of Monophysitism, and is in fact what most people mean when they refer to Monophysitism. Eutyches taught two natures before the Union, but only one after. In this, the doctrine is not different from Monophysitism. However, Eutyches went on to deny the human consubstantiality of Christ; Severus did not.

Filioque:

Latin for "and the Son", it has come to be a shorthand for the doctrine, common to Western trinitarian theology, that the Holy Spirit proceeds "from the Father and the Son". It is sometimes also referred to as the doctrine of the double (or dual) procession. It occurs in the Western version of the Nicene creed as follows: "And I believe in the Holy Ghost, ...Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son" (*Et in Spiritum Sanctum... qui ex Patre Filioque procedit*).

Iamblichus:

A Neoplatonist who elaborated upon the system of Plotinus. For Iamblichus, even Plotinus' "One" was not ineffably transcendent enough. He therefore posited a further Hypostasis above it.

Monenergism:

From the Greek meaning "one energy": the doctrine that there was only one activity in Christ.

Monotheletism:

From the Greek meaning "one will;" the doctrine that there was only one will in Christ.

Monophysitism:

Often confused with Eutychianism, Monophysitism is actually quite a complex phenomenon; it affirms the double consubstantiality of Christ, but in only one nature. It's foremost

exponents were Severus of Antioch (465-538), and Julian of Halicarnassus (ca. 518), founder of the version of Monophysitism known as "Aphtartodoceticism."

Neo-Chalcedonianism:

Another term for "Cyrillic Chalcedonianism." The term was, however, originally coined by western scholars to denote the hypothesis that the original Chalcedonian council was not sympathetic to St. Cyril of Alexandria's theology, and that a movement subsequently arose to reinterpret the council in a Cyrillic manner. This hypothesis has only recently been disproved, and therefore I have retained the term.

Neoplatonism:

A term designating the last form of Platonism in which mystical and religious elements increasingly predominate. Its founder is usually said to be Plotinus. Other prominent Neoplatonists are Iamblichus and Porphyry (from whom St. Augustine derived his understanding of Platonism).

Nestorianism:

The heresy of Nestorius (d. ce 451) which taught that the Incarnation was a kind of "split personality", being a union of a Divine Person (Christ) with a human person (Jesus) in one object of will.

Non posse eligere:

Latin for "not possible to choose." In the thought of Augustine, the "*non posse peccare*" (which see) often comes close to meaning "not possible to choose."

Non posse peccare:

Latin for "not possible to sin." St. Augustine divides the stages of man's spiritual life into four states which are described by the potency of his will. Before the fall it is "possible not to sin" (*posse non peccare*). After the fall of without Grace, it is "not possible not to sin"(*non posse non peccare*). After conversion but before Heaven, it is "possible to sin" (*posse peccare*). In Heaven (the Eschaton), it is "not possible to sin" (*non posse peccare*).

Ordo Theologiae:

Latin for "order of theology." I use it to mean the order in which the doctrines of theology are conceived and the order, broadly speaking, in which theology is *done*. In the West this *Ordo Theologiae* is usually some variation on the theme essence, attributes, persons.

Palamas, St Gregory:

(1296-1359) Taught the distinction of essence and energies in God in his defense of the practices of the Hesychasts. The basis of his doctrine was that the Hesychast claim to see the Divine Light with their bodily eyes was correct since:

1) man has both soul *and* body and
2) it was not he Divine Essence but the Divine Energies in which the hesychasts participated.

Plotinus:

Pagan philosopher and mystic (ca. 205-70), usually credited with founding Neoplatonism.

Sabellianism:

A Modalist species of Monarchialism: basically it teaches that the three persons of the Trinity are but various "roles" acted out by one person. A corollary of doctrine was "Patripassianism", which taught that the Father suffered on the Cross just as the Son did.

Sitz im Leben:

German: literally "Situation in Life:" figuratively: a theological expression meaning the totality of cultural and temporal contexts in which the Church finds herself at any given moment.

Soteriology:

That portion of Theology which deals with the Doctrine of Salvation, from the Greed word "soter", meaning "Saviour".

Theopaschite Formula:

The formula that "one of the Holy Trinity" suffered. In the Eastern Rite it occurs in the Second Antiphon "O only - begotten Son of Word of God...".

Thomism:

The scholastic system of Thomas Aquinas.

Triadology:

Simply another way of saying "trinitarian theology", or " Doctrine of the Trinity." From the Greek word "triados", meaning "Trinity."

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